



May 18, 2017
House Bill 49

Chairman Jordan, Vice Chair O'Brien, and Members of the Senate Finance General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning provisions added to Substitute House Bill 49 on behalf of the Greater Ohio Showmen's Association.

My name is David Drake and I am the currently on the First Vice President of the Greater Ohio Showmen's Association (GOSA). GOSA is a non-profit organization made up of 450+ members in the outdoor amusement industry. GOSA members service all county fairs in the state of Ohio, as well as other festivals throughout the state. GOSA members are family owned and operated businesses and earn their living providing enjoyment to others.

The festivals and events in which our members' businesses provide rides, games, and concessions have a positive economic impact to Ohio. Our members take safety and responsible regulations very seriously. We understand that inspections and license requirements, for rides in particular, are a critical tool to ensure safe operation.

We would like to talk to you today about several provisions that were added to House Bill 49 regarding inflatable rides.

1. The language adds two seats to the Advisory Counsel on Amusement Ride Safety. The GOSA does not object inflatable ride operators being a part of this Counsel.
2. The language removes the inspection fee for inflatable rides from the Ohio Revised Code. GOSA has objections to this proposal. All other inspection fees are included in the Ohio Revised Code. We do not support carving out inflatable rides.

The language instead requires the Department to adopt rules establishing inspection fees. The language also states the rates for inspection shall be prorated based on the number of months it is in operation. Many rides operating throughout Ohio are seasonal. However, under this language, only inflatable rides would be offered a prorated fee for their inspection. The ride industry is generally seasonal. There are very few licensed and inspected rides that operate 12 months per year.

We understand there have been complaints regarding the cost for inspections of inflatables. However, the GOSA strongly believes that these rides must be inspected as carefully as any permanent or mobile ride in Ohio. If you review federal consumer safety reports, you will see that many injuries happen on inflatable rides.



You might also consider that many insurance companies throughout Ohio will not even insure inflatable rides because of the risk of injury. There are preschools throughout Ohio that do not allow any field trips to locations that have inflatables. The Catholic diocese in Cleveland and other cities have banned inflatable rides at their festivals.

We ask for you to review the information on <http://www.rideaccidents.com>. You will see that many of the accidents reported happen on inflatables. On the home page of the website there is the following quote from Jim Barber, spokesman for the National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials: "I wish this was a rarity, but it's not. It happens all the time. These are probably the most dangerous amusement devices they have... You see more injuries on inflatables than almost any other amusement ride you can think of - more than roller coasters."

The GOSA is not stating that if operated properly and responsibly that inflatable rides can't be safe. However, our position is that it is important for the Ohio Department of Agriculture to continue to have the authority to inspect and regulate these operations as they see fit.

3. Language was added to the bill directing the Department of Administrative Services to study the cost of inspecting inflatables and issuing a report (Section 709.10). The Ohio Department of Agriculture will then be required to promulgate rules implementing the recommendations. The GOSA does not believe that DAS is the appropriate agency to have authority over establishing appropriate fees for inflatable ride inspections. While ODAg would have input in the study, DAS would be final authority of recommending a fee schedule. ODAg and their ride safety inspectors and staff are best equipped to determine the appropriate inspection requirements and fees.

We certainly understand that companies don't like government being overly involved in the operation of their business. However, inspections of rides that are open to the public, and particularly rides that are designed for kids, should be inspected thoroughly. Any initiative to weaken the inspection requirements is concerning and deserves proper vetting.

The GOSA would ask that the the Senate Finance General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee remove the changes added in the House related to the inspection of inflatables. I certainly thank the members of the committee for considering our perspective. I would happy to answer any questions you may have.