



Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 299

Ohio Senate Finance Committee

**Scott Metzger, Ohio Soybean Association First Vice President & Ross County Soybean Farmer
Tuesday May 22, 2018**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 299.

My name is Scott Metzger and I am a soybean farmer in Ross County, Ohio. I'm here today to testify on behalf of the Ohio Soybean Association (OSA) and its members. OSA is a member-driven, grassroots organization dedicated to improving the business climate for Ohio soybean farmers by providing leadership and advocating for sound soybean policy at the state and national levels. As the sixth-largest soybean producing state, soybeans are an important part of Ohio's economy. Soybeans are Ohio's largest crop by acreage and largest export crop. The industry employs more than 30,000 people and generates more than \$5.3 billion in economic activity annually.

OSA and the Ohio Soybean Council (OSC), Ohio's soybean checkoff organization, understand the importance of water quality in relation to agricultural production. For many years, we have actively engaged industry stakeholders and farmers about the problems facing Ohio's lakes. OSC, The Ohio State University, the Ohio Corn Marketing Program (OCMP) and the Ohio Small Grains Marketing Program (OSGMP) spearheaded research and invested millions of farmer dollars to help understand how dissolved phosphorus leaves the farm field. In addition, OSC has invested over \$200,000 to educate farmers about fertilizer management through partnerships with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF), Ohio Agribusiness Association, Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD), Ohio State University Extension, The Nature Conservancy, and the Ohio Livestock Coalition.

One of these research projects is *On-Field Ohio!*, which provides the data and scientific basis needed to rewrite the Ohio Phosphorus Index that is intended to provide a field-scale estimate of phosphorus runoff risk based on characteristics (such as degree of slope or soil type) and crop management practices (current phosphorus levels, fertilizer applied, application method and tillage). This research has been supported by checkoff funding from OSC, OCMP, OSGMP, along with funding from OFBF, USDA and many others.

OSC and its partners have invested in extensive on-farm strip trials across the state to update soybean fertilizer recommendations, known as the Tri-State Fertilizer Recommendations. Over the past 4 years, over 140 trials have been conducted to evaluate soybean response to phosphorus, potassium, and sulfur fertilization and current data suggests keeping phosphorus

levels within the Tri-state recommendations also keeps dissolved phosphorus concentrations low.

OSA supports the targeted funding approach in Senate Bill 299 that will help provide much-needed resources to the Western Lake Erie Basin. Ohio's soybean farmers have shown their commitment to being part of the solution by investing their own checkoff dollars in research and supporting the past legislation such as Senate Bill 1 and Senate Bill 150. Senate Bill 299 is an investment, by the state, in Ohio's farmers. While this bill is a step in the right direction, we still have questions and concerns around the details of the targeted phosphorous reduction. We, as an agriculture community, have reached out to the bill's sponsors for clarification and OSA's support is contingent on the response to these questions.

On behalf of the Ohio Soybean Association, thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 299. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.