



*Working together for Ohio farmers to advance
agriculture and strengthen our communities.*

**Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 293
Before the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee
Tony Seegers, Director of State Policy
May 23 2018**

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on Senate Bill 293 on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and its members.

As you know, Farm Bureau is truly a grassroots organization. Our policies come from our members through our policy development process; a yearly occurrence that culminates with our annual meeting in December in which approximately 350 of our delegates gather, debate and vote on the policies that lead Farm Bureau. Regulatory reform is one of these policies that is important to our members. Below is a portion of that policy:

We support the actions being undertaken by state government to initiate broad regulatory reform through the establishment of guidance, standards and principles for the adoption and administration of regulations.

For farmers and ranchers, regulations don't just impact their livelihood. Unlike nearly any other economic enterprise, a farm is not simply a business; it's often a family's home. If it costs the farmer money, he or she will face an abiding truth – farmers, far more often than not, are price takers, not price makers; with little ability to pass costs on to consumers, farmers are often forced to absorb increased regulatory costs.

We hear from farmers across the state about how regulations impact their lives and farms- their businesses. For instance, agricultural facilities like grain elevators and commodity processing facilities have been subjected to significant regulatory implementation costs. Another example stems from a recent tour I took of a meat processing plant in Northeast Ohio. There I was told that the compliance costs have been the most significant burden to their business in recent years. While very little has changed in terms of the safety or the sanitary standards of meat processing, the increase in paperwork has been astronomical. An additional staff person was hired just to document and fill out all needed forms to demonstrate compliance. The payroll increase is a cost that cannot be understood by the consumer or readily passed onto them in the price of the product. At the end of the day, the increase in paperwork did not create a better product for the consumer in terms of sanitary or quality improvements.



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Farmers are not opposed to regulation. However, they are opposed to regulations that unnecessarily stifle economic growth, cause undue financial hardship in order to comply, or are in conflict with one another. Farm Bureau supports efforts to protect all Ohioans through a regulatory process that is transparent, consistent, practical, economically feasible and based on science and credible data.

Thank you again Chairman LaRose and members of the committee for this opportunity to present proponent testimony on SB 293 on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau and its members. I will be happy to answer any questions.