

**Senator Tim Schaffer**

**20<sup>th</sup> State Senate District**



**Senator Frank Hoagland**

**30<sup>th</sup> State Senate District**

Chairman Koehler and Members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, thank you for allowing Senator Schaffer and I to deliver sponsor testimony on Amended Senate Bill 375.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio Director of Health signed orders on July 30<sup>th</sup> “limiting County Fairs to Junior Fair Activities and Animal Exhibitions”. This order limited Ohio’s county fairs to operate only as junior fairs, while also prohibiting rides, games, and other grandstand events. In talking to many local officials that run county fairs in our senatorial districts, we overwhelmingly heard that most of this year’s fairs were non-productive while also losing revenue.

Simply put, Senate Bill 375 will void the Director of Health’s July 30<sup>th</sup> order. This legislation is necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. It is essential that we re-open Ohio and allow local officials to make their own decisions based on the needs of their counties.

County fairs hold tremendous cultural and financial importance throughout the state. Not only do they develop our next generation to become more knowledgeable about our state’s agriculture, they also present opportunities for Ohioans to safely come together for a local showcase that celebrates what makes each county unique and exemplary. Our agricultural communities and fair boards are responsible, and can safely conduct county fairs to continue make people proud to identify their county as their home.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has prolonged, we have heard our constituents yearning for a return to normalcy. At the same time, Ohioans have become increasingly aware of the steps that are necessary for these fairs to be conducted in a safe manner. Though the state’s annual county fairs have concluded for the season, it is necessary to ensure that all county fairs fully operate next year, and continue to thereafter. It is imperative that we re-open Ohio and ensure that government does not become an obstacle to its citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver sponsor testimony on Amended Senate Bill 375.