



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

**Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 57
Before the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee
Tony Seegers, Director of State Policy
March 13, 2019**

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Hill, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and its members, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on Senate Bill 57, the hemp legalization bill.

With passage of the Farm Bill, hemp is now allowed to be grown and processed if done in accordance with the federal law. Federal law allows two paths in this regard; a state can establish its own program that then has to be approved by the United States Department of Agriculture before implementation, or the USDA can establish a program for a state. SB 57 establishes a program that follows the federal requirements for a hemp program by establishing a hemp cultivator license and procedures for the issuance and enforcement of such a license. Obviously, a state run program is preferable to one run by the federal government.

As you know, Farm Bureau is truly a grass roots organization. During our annual meeting in December, our members voted on policy supporting the legalization of industrial hemp in Ohio. I can tell you first hand, farmers are excited at the opportunity to again grow hemp legally in our state. For several weeks after the Farm Bill's passage, I received calls from eager members inquiring about when they would be able to begin hemp cultivation. Rest assured, there is an interest from farmers. While I do not have estimates, it is believed that hemp cultivation and production will benefit Ohio's farm economy and the economy overall.

Finally, on behalf of our members I'd like to thank the sponsors of the bill, Senator Huffman and Senator Hill, as well as the work done by the U.S. Hemp Roundtable in bringing hemp legalization one step closer to a reality in Ohio.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify today in support of SB 57. I will be happy to answer any questions.