



**Senate Finance Committee
Proponent Testimony for Sub. H.B. 166 – FY 2020 – 2021 Operating Budget
with Regard to the Provision for H2Ohio
Thursday, May 23, 2019**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee; The Ohio Soybean Association and the Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association would like to express our support for the creation of the H2Ohio fund within the 2020-2021 Operating Budget.

We continue to support a funding plan to help improve water quality and protect the long-term sustainability of family farms in Ohio. The proposed H2Ohio initiatives include significant resources for the implementation of best management practices (BMPs), such as cover crops, buffer strips, equipment, and precision technology that will help farmers keep nutrients in the soil where they belong.

Ohio farmers want to be part of the solution and are already taking action to curb runoff and protect the health of our waterways. This funding will help us accelerate the adoption of BMPs throughout the state and especially in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) where those practices are so desperately needed.

We commend our state leaders for using H2Ohio as a vehicle to bring all stakeholders to the table, which includes farmers, agribusiness, local governments, conservationists and environmentalists to find long-term, science-based solutions.

We do not have to choose between the health of Lake Erie and the viability of Ohio farms, we will achieve both if we work together.

In addition, we support a proposed amendment that clarifies the agricultural activities that qualify for immunity already existing in current law. The proposal also expands the areas where the qualified immunity applies; applying the provision more equally across Ohio's farming communities. While the amendment clarifies definitions and expands the geographic reach of the qualified immunity, it does not expand the qualified immunity beyond what is already contemplated by current law. As such, the amendment does not excuse actions that are not generally accepted practices, noncompliant with existing law or regulation, or present a danger to surrounding properties.

We thank you for your time and are happy to answer any questions from the committee as the need arises.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Miller".

Jon Miller, President
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Metzger".

Scott Metzger, President
Ohio Soybean Association