



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

**Senate Finance Committee
HB 166 Interested Party Testimony
Tony Seegers, Director of State Policy
June 17, 2019**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on H2Ohio as part of the budget bill.

On behalf of our members, we appreciate Governor DeWine recognizing the need to address nutrient loading and assisting Ohio farmers to improve water quality, and the work that was done in this budget by the House and the Senate. We thank the Senate for funding H2Ohio to the level it is currently in the substitute version of HB 166 as well as unanimously passing SB 2. Your work and leadership on the nutrient issue, combined with what the agricultural community and its conservation and environmental partners are doing privately, will put our state in a better position than it has been to tackle this complex problem.

While we recognize the great commitment for funding water quality improvements in this budget and the plan to continue such funding in future budgets, Farm Bureau would like the committee and the Senate as a whole to consider a secure, long term funding approach for H2Ohio. As you know, the issues with the Western Lake Erie Basin did not happen overnight and returning the Lake to health will be a lengthy process. Many of the types of projects that H2Ohio will fund are long term ones that will take years to complete. For instance, Farm Bureau's \$1 million demonstration farm venture with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service is currently in year three of a five year agreement. Statistically valid research means collecting thousands of data points over an extended period of time. Projects like the edge of field research at the demonstration farms along with studying new practices and how they impact the economics of farming and yields takes years. Implementing the on the ground projects resulting from research to provide the best "bang for the buck" also is a time consuming effort. Certainty is a bedrock for these projects and that is why secure, long term funding is vital.

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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