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June 24, 2020

Ohio Chemistry Technology Council Written Testimony In Support of Substitute House Bill 606

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Andy Swaim. I am the Director of Government and External Affairs for the Ohio Chemistry Technology Council (OCTC). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Substitute House Bill 606 (HB 606).

OCTC is the leading advocate for Ohio's chemistry technology industry, which is the third largest manufacturing industry in the state. Ohio, in turn, is the third largest chemical manufacturing state in the United States. In Ohio, the chemistry technology industry employs nearly 44,000 people, pays an average wage of over \$85,000, and provides approximately \$1.3 billion in federal, state and local taxes annually.

OCTC supports HB 606. We believe that the qualified civil immunity granted in the bill will help to ease the significant economic uncertainty placed on all businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. OCTC's member companies have been operating throughout the shutdowns as they are considered essential infrastructure. The products made by OCTC members play a critical role in the global supply chain for industries like healthcare, pharmaceuticals, logistics, defense, food and agriculture.

OCTC continues to operate and supply critical products to the healthcare and food industries. Our companies ramped up production of critical goods such as PPE, manufactured hand sanitizer, and many of our companies made donations to hospital systems and public health departments. OCTC members have been diligent throughout this crisis to offer opportunities for employees to work at home, limit non-essential travel, increase hygiene and sanitation practices, and implement health screens at their facilities.

State officials still describe this virus as a pandemic emergency, and the blunt tools of business and school closures are still imperfect in tracking and limiting the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, the roll out of orders, announcements, mandates, and recommendations from federal, state, and local authorities create constantly moving goalposts for employers. Although our member companies were largely able to remain open during this period, they are far from



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immune to the global financial crisis that the pandemic has caused. The added uncertainty of potential litigation is a serious concern in this confusing legal landscape.

HB 606 would help to protect businesses like ours that have been acting in good faith to comply with state orders during the public health crisis, while balancing legal recourse in appropriate circumstances. Therefore, OCTC encourages favorable passage of HB 606. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today.