



Ohio House Agriculture and Conservation Committee

HB 95 Proponent Testimony, March 2, 2021

Amalie Lipstreu, Policy Director, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Creech and Ranking Member Brent, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for HB 95, a Family Farm ReGeneration Act that will help ensure the continued livelihood of farming and provide for greater food system resilience in the state of Ohio.

OEFFA has been working to ensure beginning farmers have access to the land and capital they need to farm. For decades, OEFFA has provided training for next generation farmers and for four years now, has formally operated a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant expressly focused on early career and aspiring farmers. Through that experience, we have heard, first-hand, about the challenges these farmers face accessing land. If you are not fortunate enough to come from a farming family with access to land, acquiring the capital necessary to start a farm operation is formidable and the intense competition for land resources, makes that process all the more difficult.

Young farmers in Ohio are taking on the risks inherent in farming, getting trained, and working hard to build successful farm businesses. They are also facing significant challenges that require creative policy solutions. Access to—and secure tenure on—affordable, high quality farmland is the number one challenge young farmers are facing. At the same time, millions of acres of farmland are changing hands as older farmers look to retire and divest from the farmland they are stewarding.

The past year illustrated, in stark terms, the vulnerability of our food system. We must take the steps necessary to ensure that those interested in providing what is a paramount service to society—contributing to our food supply, are successful.

House Bill 95 introduced by Representative Susan Manchester and Representative Mary Lightbody is part of a necessary strategy to connecting farmers with landowners. Tax credits are an effective tool for incentivizing the transfer of agricultural assets to the next generation.

We respectfully offer the following consideration for adoption to ensure optimal flexibility in demonstrating agricultural experience:

Inclusion in Section 906.62, (C) of the following:

The Director may waive these requirements for any of the programs administered by the department if the participant requests a waiver and has a four-year degree in an agricultural program or related field,

reasonable agricultural job-related experience, a combination of degree and experience deemed acceptable by the Department. “

And in consideration of underserved, minority farmers, offer landowners who transfer farmland and other agricultural assets to minority farmers increased tax incentives through the:

Inclusion in Section 906.62. (D) 2. (a) of:

- *8% credit on the sale price of agricultural assets other than land*
- *13% credit on the value of agricultural land*

Thank you for your support of HB 95.