



Proponent Testimony on House Bill 503
House Agriculture Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives
June 4, 2024

Chairman Jones, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the committee, my name is Jim Chakeres, and I serve as the Executive Vice President of the Ohio Poultry Association (OPA). I am submitting written testimony today on behalf of Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farmers in support of House Bill 503.

The Ohio Poultry Association is a non-profit, statewide trade organization that represents over 800 Ohio egg, chicken and turkey farmers in communities throughout Ohio. Our members create nearly 20,000 jobs annually and generate nearly \$600 million in annual earnings for Ohio's economy. I am also very proud to say that OPA members are very meaningful contributors in many ways to their local communities.

Our member farmers have always been and remain firmly committed to providing safe, affordable, high-quality food not only for Ohioans but consumers around the world. The Ohio Poultry Association is acutely aware of the threat of Foreign Animal Disease. The poultry industry is dealing with the emotional and financial struggle of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). HPAI is a Foreign Animal Disease that was introduced by wild waterfowl. This situation is quite like the threat that African Swine Fever poses for Ohio's pork industry. Controlling a wild or feral population of swine is key to the prevention of this deadly disease. Passage of HB 503 will accomplish this goal.

Chairman Jones, Ranking Member Brent and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony supporting HB 503. OPA is very proud of the fact that through the years, our members have viewed our mission as a "partnership" with the Ohio General Assembly in such important areas as food safety and environmental responsibility. HB 503 will go a long way to continuing to complete that mission.