

Ohio House Civil Justice Committee  
HB 212 Proponent Testimony  
Matthew Aultman, County Commissioner  
Written-Only Testimony

Dear Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the Civil Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 212.

Thank You for allowing me to provide written testimony in support of HB 212, Ohio Property Protection Act. Land is a valuable natural resource that we as Ohioans need to protect and utilize in the most effective manner that benefits Ohioans and not allow it to fall into the hands of our adversaries to control; and this is the basis for my support of this House Bill.

As a county commissioner, our job takes on many roles, and one of those roles is protecting our citizens. Local services are critical to protecting our citizens, services such as the electric grid, water supply, sewage treatment, oil/ethanol processors, government services, and power production facilities. Without these public services the community would grind to a halt in our cities and villages where numerous citizens call home. We all know what it is like to live when an ice storm descends on a community; electricity and internet is interrupted and it takes a few hours to days to repair and get back online. We all have heard from individuals in our community when this happens and how cheerful they are when services become interrupted. Just imagine if outside forces come into areas where critical infrastructure is located and purchase land in proximity to these services; and they want to grind our economy to a halt; it becomes very easy as they are already here and near prime locations. We are not talking hours or days when something nefarious happens to our public service facilities, and with the state of the supply chain it may take months to bring services back online. This Bill protects our essential services with effective setbacks to keep outside interests from gaining nearby. While considering protecting our lands, as commissioner, I also understand the fine balance to economic development and having investors come and potentially grow business and services in our communities; but this can be done without individuals listed as a foreign adversary country owning and operating in our backyards.

As a farmer, the core of my soul, land has insurmountable value to me. It is the bringer of life, it gives birth to a new day, it supports community, it supports growth, it supports opportunity, and it will be here when we are all gone from this land; so protecting it is and should be all our goal as Ohioans. From birth, it has been instilled in me to protect what has been given to us because they are not making any more of it. We are not inheriting it from our ancestors, but borrowing it from our children; that is why we need to cherish it and protect it for them..

On Jan. 27, 1838, Lincoln spoke before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, about "the perpetuation of our political institutions." During that address, he said: "At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reaches us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and

finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide." in a summarized quote of this: "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we lose our freedoms it will be because we have destroyed ourselves from within." If we fail to act then this opens the door a little further open to allow foreign adversaries to destroy us from within.

So I challenge you and the committee to let this be a dare to be great moment and provide protections to our infrastructure, military installments, businesses, public services, citizens, and our next generation by passing this legislation.

Thank You for allowing me to provide Proponent Testimony in favor of passing HB 212, and the impact this legislation can have on protecting our communities from influences of outside interests.

Matthew Aultman  
Darke County Commissioner