



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

**Joint House and Senate Agriculture Committees  
Adam Sharp  
Executive Vice President, Ohio Farm Bureau  
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Good afternoon Chairmen Creech and Schaffer, Vice Chairs Klopfenstein and Landis, Ranking Members Brent and Hicks-Hudson, and other members of the House and Senate Ag committees, thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon at the Ohio State Fair. We are proud to welcome you to our Land and Living building, and give you just a glimpse into some of the facets of Ohio's #1 Industry. The Ohio State Fair is one of the greatest opportunities we have to bridge the urban/rural divide, and showcase our amazing industry and way of life to hundreds of thousands of Ohioans every year. I would like to thank you all, and Gov. DeWine, for your historic investment in the vision for this Fair and the Ohio Expo Center, that will allow us to continue that great mission for generations to come.

While we are of course excited to celebrate the Ohio State Fair with you all today, please keep in mind the incredible amount of events and activities that happen here on these Expo grounds throughout the year. In addition to the State Fair, there are hundreds of events on these grounds including the Ohio Beef Expo, the Spring Dairy Expo, numerous equine events such as the Quarter House Congress, the Goodguys car show, and many other events which bring in hundreds of millions of dollars of economic activity to Ohio from all across the country.

In 2019, Gov. DeWine established the Expo 2050 Task Force, aiming to map a vision that would take Expo Center and the State Fair into the future. Through the task force, many interested parties gave input on what the future of the fair should look like, and out of the final study, the vision for the Ohio Expo Center emerged. The work that has been done by the 2050 Task Force, including working with third-party master planning consultants, has lifted up the importance of investing and keeping the Ohio Expo and State Fair at its current location and investing in its future without removing its footprint in central Ohio is paramount to its continued success. The \$190 million dollars allocated to the Expo 2050 project over the next 2 years will allow for buildings to be renovated and renewed, infrastructure repaired and upgraded, and most importantly, make the Ohio State Fair and Expo Center the best in the country.

There were many other provisions in this year's budget that I would like to thank you for supporting today. Continued support and investment into the H2Ohio program will ensure safe water for all Ohioans for generations, and we look forward to seeing the program flourish through the Rivers Initiative so that it may have statewide impact. Historic tax cuts that will provide for more of Ohioans hard earned money to stay in their pockets and invest in their future. We also appreciate the creation of the Property Tax Review Committee, so that a long look can be taken at our complicated system and significant reforms can occur that will benefit



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agricultural and other types of property alike. With Ohioans facing rising costs on many fronts, finding additional ways to support farmers and landowners remains a top priority for the Ohio Farm Bureau.

I'd be remiss today if I did not also thank Mr. Virgil Strickler for his 30 years of service to the Expo and the Fair. Virgil's leadership and commitment to the success of youth has allowed the fair to not only succeed but flourish. His efforts in establishing the Youth Reserve Program, awarding \$4.6 million to more than 44,500 youth exhibitors since it was established, is just one part of Virgil's legacy, and we applaud Gov. DeWine in renaming that program after Virgil.

Again, thank you for your continued support for bringing the Ohio Expo Center and Ohio State Fair into the future, and for your steadfast commitment to Ohio's agricultural community.