

Testimony in Support of HB 433- bill to alter the current amusement ride classifications for inspection fee purposes

Ladies and Gentlemen! I would like to provide a brief history of my experience with inflatable amusement industry and working here in Ohio. My company was established in 1990 and successfully operated until 2021 primarily focused on rental of inflatable amusements. I also served as task group chair on the ASTM F2374 standards committee for the revision of the current inflatable amusement standards in 2014 and continue to be active on that committee. In support of safety related knowledge, I also achieved my NAARSO Level 1 amusement ride safety inspection certification in 2022 and continue to maintain a presence networking representing amusement ride safety as a presenter at the PA Ride Safety program and present at NAARSO, AIMS, and IOA industry seminars.

Although I exited my role as an owner in 2021, I continue to understand the challenges Ohio business owners face to remain successful and manage the fees associated with the State of Ohio process for compliance with licensing and inspection for these types of attractions. The new formula proposed for the inspection of inflatable amusements along with the reduced licensing fee better matches the current structure necessary for a small business renting these types of units can bear to be successful. To be honest, the annual cost of State compliance and licensing fees was a strong contributing factor to exit the business.

The current fee structure establishes a flat rate for inspection of different types of amusements that is not equal nor represents the actual time necessary for physical inspection. Larger mechanical amusement rides with swing, slide, or rotating mechanical function using "Tea Cups", rotating swing rides, Giant "Fun Slides", or a traditional carousel can be sited as examples that are accessed the same fee structure as inflatable amusements siting traditional "Bounce House", obstacle courses, and inflatable slides as examples. These units are constructed of vinyl material and inflatable by a mechanical blower (but are primarily non mechanical units). The time related to inspection has been determined to be less and the administrative costs associated with the license was also recommended to be reduced based on a 2024 Ohio Department of Agriculture Ride Safety division study.

Most inflatable amusements are frequently used for private events such as birthdays, school, church, or possible small carnivals with a business choosing to invest in multiple units to meet the demands or theming of an event request from customers. The current fee structure would require an annual inspection fee of \$329 and using a Halloween theme bouncy house that may have a limited seasonal use of 2-3 times, that fee of \$329 makes

offering these types of units in Ohio unreasonable. The average rental rate for an inflatable bouncy house unit is typically \$350-\$450 per unit. A reduction to the licensing fee required by the Ohio would allow businesses a realistic chance to possibly continue renting or reasonably adjust pricing adapt as a business.

In 2024, the Ohio Department of Agriculture created a task group led by David Miran to study the fee structure. After review, the task group developed the currently proposed fee structure being proposed in HB433. At the ODA Ride Safety Committee meeting on 10/3/25 Mr. Miran indicated that ODA continues to support the revised fee structure and that the bill provides for a predictable sustainability for the current Ohio Ride Safety program. The change also provides significant relief to many of the Inflatable Amusement Small Businesses to continue to operate successfully.

Thank you,

Kevin Wieging, IOA

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