

Joseph Wood Testimony in Support of HB 17

My name is Joseph Wood, and I am a property owner at Horsepower Farms in Powell, Ohio.

Horsepower Farms properties are used as extensions of our homes—like a detached garage or carriage house. They are not businesses, not storage rentals, and not places of commerce. Many are customized with kitchens, lofts, and entertainment spaces, and are used for hobbies or to host family and friends.

Despite this, the Delaware County Auditor classifies our properties as *commercial garages*. This misclassification has a significant impact, driving up our property taxes, utilities, and insurance. By contrast, Union County correctly classifies similar properties as *residential structures*.

Ohio law is unclear on how to classify facilities like ours. But when commercial activity is expressly prohibited—as it is at Horsepower Farms—it makes no sense to label them as commercial. Our properties are deed-restricted from business use under our association bylaws, and we even prohibit nuisances that could bother neighbors.

Horsepower Farms is zoned *residential* by the City of Powell and designed to blend into surrounding neighborhoods with quality construction, landscaping, security, and unobtrusive lighting.

HB 17 brings needed clarity to this gray area in the Ohio Revised Code. It ensures that properties like ours are treated fairly, consistently, and in line with their true residential use.

I urge your support for HB 17. Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.