



OHIO SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

Interested Party Testimony - House Bill 291
Ohio House Development Committee
Brandon Kern, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Policy Director
February 18, 2026

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee and members of the House Development Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to submit interested party testimony on House Bill 291. I am Brandon Kern, Deputy Executive Director and Senior Policy Director of the Ohio Soybean Association.

Soybeans are Ohio's #1 agricultural export with over 30% of Ohio's soybeans going to international markets. As the 7th largest soybean exporter in the country, Ohio's soybean industry provides a quality, convenient, and sustainable export for international markets around the globe.

Ohio commodity and specialty soybeans are consistently among the highest quality soybeans grown in the United States. Our soil quality and weather help produce soybeans that are higher in protein than those grown elsewhere. On top of this, Ohio has the logistics in place to effectively and efficiently transport soybeans to key ports for exporting internationally. Thanks to our extensive system of rail lines, interstate roadways, shuttle facilities, crush facilities and grain and river elevators, exporting Ohio soybeans is simple and economical.

Every day, farmers are working to make our crop more marketable, but we can only do so much without strong relationships with international partners at the state level. H.B. 291 lays the foundation for a stronger, more connected Ohio by creating the Ohio International Trade Commission. This Commission will position Ohio as a global leader in innovation, investment, and economic collaboration with up to eight partner nations.

Through this effort, Ohio will open doors to new trade and investment opportunities, promote joint research initiatives that drive innovation, and create pathways for business and academic exchanges. The Commission will strengthen shared infrastructure investment and build a framework of mutual economic support that benefits communities across the state.

With agriculture being Ohio's number one industry, our organization believes there is importance in agriculture being involved in this process. While agriculture is not formally represented within the membership of the commission, it's our hope to find ways to engage with the commission in the future as it conducts this important work.

Agriculture is a pillar of Ohio's economy, and continued legislative support is critical to ensure our industry remains strong and competitive. We appreciate your leadership in advancing policies that benefit Ohio's farmers, rural communities, and agribusinesses.