

Good morning, members of the committee. My name is Joey Ellwood and I am one of the few remaining hemp farmers in Ohio.

I'm here speak to you today about the critical need for outdoor hemp & Cannabis cultivation in our state.

I helped develop Ohio Farm Bureau Policy last year, our policy advocates couldn't be here but I wanted to share the language that I was That The Ohio Farm Bureau Voted on and passed last year.

The Ohio Farm Bureau New Policy States in their newly developed language last year (which I helped pass)

We support allowing hemp farmers into the new Issue 2 language to give priority license access for dispensary/cultivation licenses in Ohio to be in effect as initial phase of medical applicants are granted their recreational licenses.

The Revised language in SB 56 not only flies in the face of the Farm Bureau's support, but it adds indoor expansion for those operating in the state.

I believe there's around 70,000 Farm Bureau Members.

37 seven entities get to grow this plant? The Farmers aren't allowed?

Growing Indoors not only increases our costs but also makes it incredibly difficult to compete with neighboring states like Michigan, where outdoor cultivation is allowed and thriving.

Michigan's policies have enabled their farmers to produce hemp and cannabis at a significantly lower cost. As a result, our oil prices for gummies and edibles in Ohio are

much higher, and our processors are struggling to find affordable, local supply. This puts Ohio farmers and processors at a severe disadvantage. We have the resources, the land, and the experience growing hemp at scale outdoors, which is the same plant.

By allowing outdoor cultivation, we can significantly reduce production costs, support local processors, and ensure Ohio remains competitive in the hemp market. It would also benefit the state's economy by creating jobs and fostering innovation in the agricultural sector.

I want to be clear: I understand and respect the desire to expand cultivation for Tier 1 operators. That's fine. But please — don't leave Ohio's farmers behind. We need Tier 3 cultivation included in this bill. These are the small, craft growers who represent the backbone of Ohio agriculture. They deserve a seat at the table.

As a proud member of the Ohio Farm Bureau, I want this committee to know that we have developed policy language in support of farmers being part of this industry, and we will continue developing more. This is a priority for us. Farmers want to contribute to this emerging industry with integrity, and they deserve the opportunity to do so.

Please don't let Ohio fall behind. Let's support outdoor cultivation and ensure all Ohio farmers — big and small — can participate in this opportunity. Thank you for your time and consideration.