



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

BARBARA MOORE HOLT

KELLY JONES

JASON HAYSLIP

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, and Ranking member Troy, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB540

My name is Jason Hayslip, Adams County Commissioner and I am a lifelong resident of Adams County, Ohio I grew up here, on the same ground where I raise my family and serve the people who call this place home. Since I was a little boy, I have heard conversations and sometimes real frustrations about the large landholdings owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the fact that they pay no property taxes.

Today, that concern remains. TNC owns approximately 20,000 acres in Adams County. While these lands are exempt from property tax, this organization earns revenue through carbon credit programs, and their operations support high paying employees who benefit financially. Meanwhile, the people I represent, farmers, homeowners, and small business owners continue to pay their fair share to support our schools, fire departments, local 911, EMS services and Law enforcement and all local services to keep our community safe.

Over the past several years, Adams County has lost millions of dollars in potential tax revenue while large corporations continue to generate income from these same properties. That is a hard reality for the working families and small communities who carry the local tax burden.

This is not an opposition to conservation. We all appreciate the beauty of our county and the importance of protecting it for future generations. But this is about fairness. It is about ensuring that everyone who benefits from our counties land also contributes to the wellbeing of the community that supports it.

Our citizens are deeply concerned that valuable properties are not helping generate revenue for the local infrastructure that serves them. As both a landowner and a public servant, I believe it is time to review this structure and pursue a fair, balanced approach whether that be through partial taxation, a Payment in Lieu of taxes (PILT) program, or other equitable solutions.

I want to thank each of you for taking the time to hear these concerns on behalf of the people of Adams County. We are not asking for special treatment, only equal responsibility Our community believes in hard work and fairness, and it is in the same spirit that we ask for change and accountability from large land organizations like TNC.

Thank you for listening, and for your service to the people of this great state and county.

Respectfully,

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