



**Senate General Government Committee
SB 88 Proponent Testimony
Evan Callicoa, Director of State Policy
March 25, 2025**

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and other honorable members of the Senate General Government Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SB 88. Our members have grown much more concerned about foreign ownership in recent years. Any threat to Ohio farmland is one that our members and Ohio Farm Bureau take very seriously.

Land owned by foreign adversaries is only the latest threat to protecting farmland not just in Ohio but across the country. In the most recent “Ag Census” published by the US Department of Agriculture, Ohio has lost nearly 300,000 acres of farmland in the last 5 years. In most, if not all, cases, that land will never be able to be productive farmland again, which is a unique issue that our industry faces compared to others.

As Ohio continues to face economic, housing, and energy development pressures, our organization hopes to engage with all sectors for effective land use management. As the General Assembly reviews the operating budget, we urge consideration of options that enhance rural community planning, such as support for local land use planning and empowering communities to shape their own economic futures.

Last Congress, bipartisan legislation was introduced to address this issue through the AFIDA Improvements Act of 2024 (S. 3666). This bill aims to strengthen current laws on reporting foreign ownership by expanding data collection and enhancing enforcement against suspected non-filers. Without real-time data, it is impossible to understand the true threat to Ohio and American agriculture posed by foreign adversaries.

We are thankful to the sponsors and the General Assembly’s interest in this issue. Still, land held by foreign adversaries is only one of many factors contributing to farmland loss, and we encourage the General Assembly to look at this issue holistically and help Ohio’s number one industry continue to flourish. We thank Senator Johnson for introducing this legislation and the committee for allowing OFBF to provide testimony today. I’d be happy to answer any questions at this time.