



*Working together for Ohio farmers to advance  
agriculture and strengthen our communities.*

**Ohio Farm Bureau Federation  
Proponent Testimony on SR 376  
Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee  
Jack Irvin, Sr. Director, State and National Policy  
October 23, 2019**

Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on SR 376, on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

As the largest general farm organization in Ohio and representative for thousands of farm families and the agricultural community across our great state, we cannot stress enough the vital importance of trade to the long-term health and sustainability of agriculture. With 95% of the world's population outside the United States and with the majority of the global economic growth also projected to take place outside our borders, simple math says we better pay very close attention to trade.

We continue to urge for the swift ratification of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) with our congressional leaders, and would welcome the Ohio Senate joining in that chorus with the passage of SR 376. The USMCA will benefit Ohio and the U.S. agriculture and food industries while providing consumers a more abundant supply of high-quality, safe food at affordable prices. It also helps reinforce the message to the world that the U.S. is open for business and will negotiate in good faith opening the door for future trade successes.

Over the last 25 years, U.S. food and agricultural exports to Canada and Mexico have more than quadrupled under NAFTA – growing from \$9 billion in 1993 to nearly \$40 billion in 2018. NAFTA has significantly helped create a reliable, high-quality supply of food products for U.S. consumers, while supporting more than 900,000 American jobs in food and agriculture and related sectors of the economy. USMCA builds on the success of the NAFTA agreement and will ultimately lead to freer markets and fairer trade. This modernized trade agreement makes improvements to further enhance U.S. food and agricultural exports to our neighbors and would deliver an additional \$2.2 billion in U.S. economic activity.

The U.S. International Trade Commission's new report, the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement: Likely Impact on the U.S. Economy and Specific Industry Sectors*, confirms that the USMCA will improve market access for U.S. farmers, ranchers and food producers. The report states that USMCA would have "a positive impact on the U.S. agriculture sector." Furthermore, it "would likely have a positive impact on all broad industry sectors within the U.S. economy," raising U.S. GDP by \$68.2 billion. USMCA further strengthens U.S. food and agricultural trade by enhancing standards for biotechnology; reducing the use of trade distorting policies; establishing modern, science-based sanitary and phytosanitary standards; reinforcing disciplines for science-based SPS measures; improving grading standards and services; facilitating the

marketing of food and agricultural products; and strengthening safeguards for commonly used food names. These advances help provide certainty in the North American market, which is essential to the success of Ohio agriculture, especially during these challenging economic times within the agricultural community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SR 376. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.