

To The Ohio Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I'm writing as a 40 year veteran of the organic farming community in West Salem Ohio. I have raised organic grains and beef farm on 1200 acres in Wayne County since 1981. My entry into farming was facilitated by the generosity of my father and the desperate need to make land payments in those days of 18% interest. Today my children have chosen other careers and I'm faced with selling out to the highest bidder or mentoring a younger farmer who might carry on with the environmental programs and methods that have I have worked so hard to build in this challenging but rewarding organic market. It is from my love of the land to wish my legacy be furthered by the latter.

HB 95 goes a long way to further this cause which preserves farmland and promotes good stewardship by helping the next generation maintain Ohio's greatest industry.

This bill gives landowners without farming heirs the incentive to help a young farmer keep productive land productive. Instead of selling to a developer or another larger corporate farm that diminishes the true agricultural potential, HB 95 gives us a tool that helps the most able and interested persons carry on with the legacy of the land, producing food and contributing to the Buckeye economy in the best manner.

Additional benefits of this bill include the tax credits for necessary equipment and livestock sold to the new younger farmer without the need for expensive and embarrassing auctions. Again these credits give the seller and buyer the assistance needed to facilitate a more equitable and successful transition to the next generation of Ohio farmer.

The flexibility of the credits will enable those of us in need to find the most workable plan for any transitioning situation.

Your timing is impeccable as Ohio's farmers are aging fast and the time to aid our successors is now.

Please join me in expressing support for HB 95

Dean McIlvaine