



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

**Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 63
Before the House Civil Justice Committee
Tony Seegers, Director of State Policy
March 3, 2021**

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and its members, thank you for the opportunity to present written proponent testimony on House Bill 63.

As you know, Farm Bureau is truly a grass roots organization. Our policy positions, what gives me my marching orders here at the statehouse, all come from our members. Each year members meet in county farm bureau policy development committees to discuss and vote on county, state, and federal farm bureau policy. From there, that policy comes to the Ohio Farm Bureau policy development committee where that committee will not only debate the policies that are submitted, but will also review our current policy book. All this work culminates in our annual meeting in December when approximately 350 delegates debate and vote on the county submitted policies resulting in our policy book that will be used for the following year.

One of the most important positions for our members, and one that they embrace with the utmost passion, is the protection of private property rights. Seldom an issue stirs our members' ire more than the use of eminent domain. While we understand that eminent domain is a necessary tool, we believe it should be used as a last resort. As such, our policy, specifically regarding the subject of the bill, reads in pertinent part:

“Eminent Domain

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Metropolitan parks and/or park districts have the power of eminent domain. We oppose the use of eminent domain for recreational purposes.”

“Bicycle and Recreational Trails

We oppose:

- The use of public monies for the construction, improvement, expansion and maintenance of recreational trails.
- Trail expansion until such a time that groups, such as Rails-to-Trails and park districts, can prove necessity through a cost analysis of the economic impact of trail expansions on agricultural activities versus the economic benefit of trail expansion for the local community.”

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Farm Bureau as a proponent of HB 63.