



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

**House Transportation and Public Safety Committee
H.B. 445 Proponent Testimony
Jenna Reese, Director of State Policy
November 16, 2021**

Chair Baldrige, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to voice Farm Bureau's support for HB 445, which will enhance 911 services for Ohioans.

It is no secret that crumbling infrastructure plagues the state and telephone services are no exception. Copper landlines have long outlived their serviceability and are no longer reliable in many parts of rural Ohio. In addition, the vast majority of 911 calls are coming from cell phones instead of landlines, which is very different from the world in which the 911 system was created. Farm Bureau supports, "enhanced 911 services for cell phones, voice over internet protocol (VOIP), cable and emerging technologies, and the additional monthly charge to pay for the new technology," (Telephone Service 283).

Ohio enjoys a varied landscape, especially in scenic Appalachia, so it is imperative that cellphones are able to contact 911 without regard to geography in these areas under the new generation system. We support upgrading the integrity of the 911 system in a way that does not disadvantage those who live in topographically diverse areas. Farm Bureau members have suffered from a lack of cellphone service in emergency situations. One farmer went down in his field due to a health emergency and couldn't get a signal to contact his wife. Eventually she went to check on him due to the length of time he had been gone and found him in distress. She then had to leave him alone and drive back to their house to call emergency services. The length of time it took for this family to contact emergency services could be reduced significantly by the upgrades contained in HB 445 and be the difference of life or death for many of our members.

Furthermore, the ability for 911 services to utilize cellphone GPS would reduce the time it takes to find our members in need of emergency services even further. The majority of farming accidents occur in the field as opposed to at the permanent home address used by the current 911 system. Using the GPS system in their cellphone will expedite emergency services locating our farmers regardless of where the accident occurred.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify and to Representative Carfagna and Representative Smith for sponsoring this potentially life-saving legislation. I'm happy to take questions.