



Senate Bill 338

Proponent Testimony

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, on behalf of the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC), thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present proponent testimony before you on Senate Bill 338.

Local health districts (LHD) are responsible for enforcement of state food code. LHDs use this as an opportunity to educate food facility operators on food safety. The Ohio Departments of Health and Agriculture are required to survey/evaluate every local health district on their implementation of the food code. For over 10 years the survey consists of an ODH or ODA surveyor and an LHD Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) separately inspecting several food facilities and then comparing the number of violations that were found and documented. The LHD EHS is judged by the number of violations they document as compared to how many the state inspector finds. Unfortunately, this has led to a race to document as many violations as you can possibly find. For example, if there are 15 cracked floor tiles in the kitchen, it will be documented 15 separate times. Prior to this survey process, it would only be documented one time and the EHS would state that there are 15 cracked tiles and then explain the public health significance.

SB 338 will replace this process with an exam to test local inspectors' knowledge of the Food Code. The test results will allow the LHD and the state agencies to focus trainings on any weaknesses seen by the test results and put the focus of inspections back on risk-based assessments focused on critical violations of the food code. And allow LHDs to focus on a collaborative, educational, risk-based approach when inspecting food facilities.

On behalf of local health district members, AOHC supports the addition of these updates to the way we evaluate local health inspector's knowledge of the food code by giving them an actual test of their knowledge and asks this committee to favorably vote for Senate Bill 338.

I would like to thank the committee again for the opportunity to present testimony, and I am happy to take any questions at this time.

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