

Columbus Office
Vern Riffe Center
77 S. High Street
10th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111
(614) 466-1645
Rep25@ohiohouse.gov



Committees:
Homeland Security, Ranking Member
Criminal Justice
Finance
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Cecil Thomas
State Representative

House Agriculture Committee
HB 549 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House Agriculture Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 549 to implement a permissive motor fuel quality testing program in Ohio.

Ohio is one of three states (others being Alaska or Nebraska) that do not test for fuel quality at the pump. While County Auditors currently test for quantity, there aren't uniform standards in place to ensure the caliber of motor fuel. This raises an issue of concern as contaminated gas can cause serious damage to vehicles that costs thousands of dollars to fix.

HB 549 permits, not mandates, County Auditors and the Department of Agriculture to test for octane, sediment, and water levels in fuel. Specifically, this legislation authorizes the Department of Agriculture to create a standard motor fuel quality testing program or would allow County Auditors to implement their own. Fuel inspectors will then be permitted to issue violations for dangerous conditions based on their tests. After an initial violation, the inspector may issue an order to stop selling fuel, a simple written citation, or both.

Importantly, inspectors must use equipment that meets the most recent standards established by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the Department of Agriculture. All testing equipment would be provided and funded by the Department of Agriculture or the County Auditors. Counties also may use fuel testing equipment from other counties, but only the fuel inspectors from the county who owns the equipment may perform the tests.

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Brent, thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 549. I am happy to answer any questions.