



9798 Karmar Court, Suite A  
New Albany, OH 43054

Phone: 614-882-5887  
OhioPork.org

Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
House Bill 33  
Proponent Testimony  
May 18, 2023

Chairman Dolan, Vice-Chairman Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) FY24-25 budget request.

The Ohio Pork Council represents approximately 2,500 members, promoting the Ohio pork industry and its products and raising awareness of the challenges facing the industry. The total output of the pork industry in Ohio is \$3.4 billion with \$1.4 billion of value-added activity, employing 28,175 people and paying more than \$115 million in state and local taxes.

#### **Animal Disease Preparedness and Response**

As demonstrated by the outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza across Ohio, a foreign animal disease outbreak is economically devastating to the food animal industry, jeopardizes food security, and is costly to mitigate for the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Ohio's pig farmers are facing an increasing threat from foreign animal diseases, such as African Swine Disease. As an industry, we are committed to working harmoniously with local, state, and federal agencies to prevent and respond to ongoing animal diseases.

When it comes to the animal agriculture industry, it is acknowledged Ohio falls short of addressing growing needs. Thanks to the Ohio General Assembly's previous investment in replacing the antiquated Animal Disease and Diagnostic Laboratory (ADDL) and resources, a new lab will address some of the gaps. However, the facility is only as good as the staff and the technology available. The Senate's support of ODA's FY24-25 request will elevate the ADDL facility by modernizing outdated IT technology and targeting talented, specialized individuals to help Ohio's animal agriculture thrive.

#### **H2Ohio**

H2Ohio, a pioneer program, is a collaborative and proactive approach to employing advancing methods for improving water quality in the state. The success and the expansion of the program are thanks to the continued support of the Ohio General Assembly.

Ohio pig farmers' livelihoods are directly tied to the air, water, and land. Manure is an effective, natural, and organic nutrient source that can increase soil productivity with less runoff.



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Programs like H2Ohio support Ohio farm families in developing nutrient management plans, manure utilization, and proper phosphorus placement.

The Ohio Pork Council asks for the reinstatement of the Executive proposed funding of H2Ohio and the request of FY24-25 for the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

To optimize the impact of the H2Ohio program, we ask the Senate not to divert funding from the Ohio Department of Agriculture for a pilot program as proposed by the Lake Erie Foundation. As the program evolves, it is vital to properly support the H2Ohio resources and staffing for ODA, therefore not inhibiting the agency's ability to effectively manage the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 33.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl Day".

Cheryl Day  
Executive Vice President