



**Ohio Senate
Ways and Means Committee
HB 324 Proponent Testimony
Tyler Drewes, Drewes Farms
June 12, 2024**

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee, I'm Tyler Drewes, a farmer from Putnam County.

Today we are here to talk about the merits of a narrowly focused, time-limited bill that makes sense for Ohio's farmers, Ohio's ethanol producers, Ohio's fuel retailers, and most importantly Ohio's consumers. I know others will speak to the value that House Bill 324 will bring to all of these constituent groups, but I want to share with you what the biofuels market has meant inside the farm gate for family farmers like me.

My family farm in Wood County has been in the family for 6 generations. As the industry has changed, our farming has evolved. Like any other industry, we've gotten more specialized over the generations. Now, we exclusively produce grain that is in turn used for livestock and ethanol production right here in Ohio. About half of my grain goes to livestock, and the other half goes to the local ethanol plant in Leipsic, OH.

But even that level of market diversity for my grain is relatively new.

I was in college when the United States Congress adopted the federal Renewable Fuel Standard. That law, broadly supported by both Republicans and Democrats, set a pathway for American crops to be utilized in the production of motor fuels that could accomplish diverse goals: reducing costs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing dependence on foreign oil.

It had the added advantage of generating higher revenues inside the farm gate. For me personally, that was a game changer.

As I was approaching graduation, it wasn't yet clear that there would be a place for me on the family farm. I was facing the very real prospect of seeking employment off the farm, and that's a prospect I didn't care for, because I love farming. I love the challenges it gives me each and every year. I love to see the results of our labor as harvest nears. I love how I get to work with my hands and my mind. I love every bit of it. But the reality is that without the new market Ohio's ethanol industry generated, I was going to have to look elsewhere for gainful employment while waiting for my turn at the helm.

Instead, I've had 16 years of work on the farm. Sixteen years of working alongside my dad. Sixteen years of trying new ways of doing business and innovating with new practices that make us even better at what we do.

This industry has been the lifeblood of grain farming in Ohio and kept family farms in business.

The bill in front of you today can build on that. House Bill 324 can generate new demand for Ohio grain while also delivering the very real benefit of lower gas prices to Ohio's consumers. Like those consumers I feel the squeeze of inflation. Everything costs more. But right now, we have a chance to deliver relief at the pump for them, and more demand for corn produced by Ohio farmers like me.

Please keep my story in mind as you come to a vote on House Bill 324. Remember that when good policy reinforces market competition, a lot of people benefit. Consumers and producers alike benefit when competitive forces are encouraged. We find new opportunities as we tackle new challenges. Today, I'm asking for you to enact one of those good policies.

Please vote yes on House Bill 324.