



Ohio Senate
Ways and Means Committee
HB 324 Proponent Testimony
John Settlemyre, Owner, Settlemyre Farms, LLC
June 12, 2024

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee, I'm John Settlemyre, a farmer from Clinton County, and a member of the Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association (OCWGA). Our association represents the interests of Ohio's grain producers, and on their behalf, I am grateful for the opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 324.

Our association serves as the voice of our membership in policy matters at both the state and federal levels, and House Bill 324 represents one of our highest priorities: promoting sound policy that will increase the use of low cost, low carbon, modern ethanol.

Each year, our grain farmers have the opportunity to market their corn to Ohio's seven ethanol plants which have capacity to produce more than 732 million gallons of fuel grade ethanol annually. Since the first Ohio ethanol plant opened in 2008, the market kick-started by this industry both in Ohio and nationally has contributed to the stability of local grain markets – adding more than \$1.00 of value to each bushel grown by Ohio's farm families. Coupled with livestock and exports, ethanol production diversifies and strengthens our market opportunities and helps our small businesses thrive.

But ethanol means much more to our members personally than positive numbers on a balance sheet. For family farms like mine, this added value means we can continue to grow and pass along our passion for agriculture to the next generation. Ohio's grain farmers are committed to clean air, clean water and healthy soils. Ethanol has played a critical role in improving air quality across the nation while also keeping family farms in business.

Ethanol blended products, which fuel more than 98% of vehicle miles driven each year, have contributed to a 40 million metric ton per year decrease in carbon emissions. That's the equivalent of removing more than 8 million cars from our roads every year. Recent scientific studies show that ethanol offers a 46% reduction in harmful emissions compared to traditional petroleum fuels^[1]. By encouraging higher blends of ethanol at the pump, we will promote an even healthier future for our children with a ready-made fuel that can be used in 9 out of 10 cars on the road today.

And while this bill can help realize these benefits, there are also co-benefits to the broader agricultural sector as well. When Ohio's ethanol plants produce fuel, they also generate high protein animal feed known as dried distiller's grains, corn oil, and CO2 that can be sold to the beverage industry for carbonation. Modern ethanol production extracts value from every bit of a corn kernel to benefit multiple sectors.



This is critical, because Ohio’s grain farmers continue to innovate and provide greater yields of this incredible row crop. When I began farming fifty years ago with my dad, our average yields for corn were in the neighborhood of 50 bushels per acre. Just last year in Ohio, the state-wide average was nearly 200 bushels per acre! We’re producing this grain at incredible rates to exceed domestic demand and still export more than 20% of our grain every year. I take it as a point of pride: Ohioans are really good at growing grain and meeting demand.

Lastly, I’d like to speak to you as a consumer in central Ohio. Currently, I have limited access to E-15, also known as Unleaded 88 gasoline. The bill you are considering today directly addresses this need by incentivizing retailers to make long-term investments in the infrastructure of their facilities. I firmly believe that when an average consumer sees the savings per gallon afforded by Unleaded 88, typically 15 cents per gallon on average last summer, they will opt in and make a positive economic decision for their families.

In summary, higher blends of ethanol offer further carbon emission reduction benefits, cleaner air, savings to consumers, and critical market stability to Ohio’s grain producers and the broader rural economy. **Ohioans can save money here, driving cars built here, fueled by the corn we grow here.** I urge you to support Ohio’s grain farmers, our environment, and everyday consumers by voting for this important legislation.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 324. I’d be happy to answer any question you may have.

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- [1] “EH&E Study Shows Corn Ethanol Emits 46% Less Greenhouse Gases Than Gasoline – Finding Differs from Conventional Wisdom Suggesting Only 20%.” Environmental Health & Engineering, September 15, 2023. <https://ehinc.com/news/corn-ethanol-emits-46-less-greenhouse-gases-than-gasoline/#:~:text=Research%20from%20EH%26E%20shows%20that,are%2046%25%20lower%20than%20gasoline.>