



Ohio Soybean Association 2024 Policy Priorities (Updated 2/13/2024)

Explore Avenues to Reduce Volatility in Farmland Property Taxes

Reform of the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program, last passed by the legislature in 2017, made significant progress toward a more accurate accounting of farmland's value based on its ability to generate income from agricultural production. Yet one element farmers still face with CAUV values is significant volatility that makes budgeting for tax bills a challenge. As the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform continues its hearings throughout 2024, ***OSA will explore options and keep an open dialogue with policymakers to explore additional ways to fight against volatility.***

Create a Fair Eminent Domain Process for Landowners

In most states, when there is a dispute over eminent domain, there is a streamlined system where a court determines a taking, and that same court handles the trial to set the amount of compensation to the landowner. Current Ohio law, on the other hand, requires a landowner to first file a lawsuit to force the government or entity taking property to follow the law, then separately go through the eminent domain process. The farmer must prove by "clear and convincing evidence" that the law wasn't followed, an incredibly high standard of proof to meet. House Bill 64, introduced by State Rep. Darrell Kick (OH-98) and State Rep. Rodney Creech (OH-40), would create a more direct legal route for a landowner to receive compensation when property is taken by the government without compensation, using a court action called inverse condemnation. ***The Ohio Soybean Association Supports this legislation.***

Safeguard Quality Grain Testing

The Ohio House passed HB 238, occupational licensing reform, which will eliminate the Grain Commodity Tester certificate issued by the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). That three-year certification requires individuals who conduct grain testing at elevators to qualify to do so by passing an examination. OSA raised concerns about the complete elimination of quality assurance measures for commodity testers and asked lawmakers to take a different approach. As a result, members of the House State and Local Government Committee amended language into House Bill 238 that requires testers to complete training based on USDA grain inspections standards every five years and for ODA to maintain records of all individuals who have completed the training. ***OSA supports this approach.***

Clarify the Ag Sales Tax Exemption

State Rep. Don Jones has introduced HB 347, which would create clarity around the ability to apply the Ohio Agricultural Sales Tax Exemption to trailers, ATVs and UTVs. ***The Ohio Soybean Association is supporting this legislation.*** Current law already provides for the sales tax exemption but does not provide a list of eligible products, rather relies on a declaration by the purchaser that the product will be used primarily for farming activities. Since trailers, ATVs and



UTVs have many uses, there has been ongoing dispute as to whether the exemption can be applied to those products. HB 347 creates a legal presumption that these items will be used primarily for farming if the purchaser is a farmer. Under the bill, the purchaser would need to provide copies of their past three IRS Schedule F documents to qualify.

Promote Smart Growth Policies

There is no doubt that pressures from industry, investors, energy production and sprawl will continue to mount across Ohio in a battle for highly productive ground. If no new policy approaches are implemented, the American Farmland Trust estimates over 500,000 agricultural acres will be taken out of production and converted to both highly developed uses and low-density residential uses by 2040. *OSA is encouraging state and local leaders to think strategically, utilizing tools such as farmland preservation easements, Agricultural Security Areas and Agricultural Districts.* This must be a policy priority to help ensure Ohio can utilize some of the most productive farm ground in the world to continue to produce abundant and affordable food for consumers.

Continue Investing in the Success of H2Ohio

The Ohio Soybean Association commends investments made by members of the General Assembly in farm best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality. Through this support, H2Ohio has expanded from serving an area consisting of 14 counties in NW Ohio to a statewide effort. H2Ohio continues to see tremendous support from Ohio farmers. Producers have enrolled 1.4 million acres into Voluntary Nutrient Management Plans (VNMP) and implemented over 640,000 acres of additional BMPs across those fields thanks to this program.

Implement the 2050 Ohio Expo Center Master Plan

A strategic vision for the 360-acre Ohio Expo Center property, which is home to the Ohio State Fair and hosts many other events throughout the year, was developed in 2022. Resources are needed to support this plan to conduct renovation, modernization, and demolition of several buildings; the addition of new exhibition facilities, parking garages, and other areas to enhance the guest experience; and improved access between the Ohio Expo Center and the nearby Ohio History Connection. *The Ohio Soybean Association appreciates the support provided in the last capital budget bill and encourages continued support.*

Promote Renewable Fuel Production

Demand for renewable fuels such as biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel is growing among transportation sectors such as rail, marine and air carriers. With most of our country's production capabilities located west of the Mississippi, the potential for Ohio to serve as home for expanded renewable fuel production capabilities holds tremendous economic development potential for our state. *The Ohio Soybean Association will be a leader in this space to ensure farmers can capitalize on new demand growth, promote the use of soybeans as feedstocks for these fuels, and promote Ohio as the ideal destination for production facilities that will drive innovation in our economy.*