Working together for Ohio farmers to advance agriculture and strengthen our communities.

March 17, 2021

The Honorable Jay Edwards, Chair
Ohio House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
77 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Edwards,

Over the last eight years, Ohio farmers have suffered declining farm income, devastating crop damage, eroding markets and now the effects of a global pandemic. Rural communities are hanging on as their small businesses close, students attempt to learn from home and economic opportunities dry up. We would like to highlight our support for funding to help revitalize Ohio businesses and our rural communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has delivered an economic blow to many industries, but none so much as our hospitality and entertainment industries. The shutdown came at a high price to our bars and restaurants, and many of them will never recover. This is a crucial market for our farmers that largely dried up during an already challenging time. Small businesses such as restaurants and others who produce value-added agricultural products in our small communities need additional support to survive. It is incredibly important that these industries get some relief as the situation was completely out of their control that forced them to stop doing business.

As you know, our Ohio State, independent, and county fairs are also extremely important to our members and communities. We would like to specifically lift up the urgent need for financial resources for our fairs to operate this year in the absence of many last year. The 4-H program provides youth all across the State of Ohio with the leadership development skills they need, and Ohio's fairs give them the opportunity to showcase those skills and their communities to support them.

Farm Bureau supports HB 168 and HB 169, and we urge the committee to support these pieces of legislation and the critical support they provide to Ohio's businesses and communities.

Respectfully,

Jenna Reese
Director of State Policy
Ohio Farm Bureau

280 N. High Street, 6th Floor | P.O. Box 182383 | Columbus, OH 43218-2383 | Phone: 614-249-2400 | Fax: 614-249-2200 | ofbf.org