



SB 150  
Senate Agriculture Committee

Interested Party Testimony by Christopher Henney  
November 13, 2013

Chairman Hite, Vice Chairman Balderson, Ranking Member Gentile and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today as an interested party on Senate Bill 150.

I am Chris Henney, and I serve as president and chief executive officer for the Ohio Agribusiness Association. OABA is a 130-year-old agribusiness trade association that represents Ohio's fertilizer industry, along with the grain, feed, seed and crop protection product industries. We are affiliated with, and supportive of, The Fertilizer Institute and the Agricultural Retailers Association at the national level, the International Plant Nutrition Institute at the international level, and we administer the Certified Crop Adviser program locally in Ohio.

OABA recognizes the 4R Nutrient Stewardship program as the foundation for all agricultural nutrient management practices. The 4R Nutrient Stewardship program provides a framework to achieve cropping system goals, such as increased production, increased farmer profitability, enhanced environmental protection and improved sustainability. To achieve those goals, the 4R concept incorporates the:

- **Right fertilizer source** at the
- **Right rate**, at the
- **Right time** and in the
- **Right place**.

Properly managed fertilizers support cropping systems that provide economic, social and environmental benefits. On the other hand, poorly managed nutrient applications can decrease profitability and increase nutrient losses, potentially degrading soil and water resources.

In addition to the legislation before you today, it is important that you be aware of the numerous voluntary nutrient management activities that are taking place:

- Farmers have opened their fields for demonstration, monitoring and evaluation.
- Education and outreach activities related to 4R Nutrient Stewardship are taking place all across Ohio.

- Over \$1 million has been raised by agricultural organizations and businesses, and subsequently, federal matching funds have been secured to provide for Ohio State University researchers to investigate edge-of-field impacts of management practice changes implemented to reduce the off-site transport of nutrients. We commend the Ohio Soybean Council and the Ohio Corn Marketing Program for spearheading these efforts.
- A voluntary third party 4R Nutrient Stewardship Standard has been developed to recognize fertilizer dealers and nutrient service providers as operating their business in a manner that is consistent with the principles of 4R Nutrient Stewardship. OABA has been intimately involved in the development and implementation of the pilot certification program and will serve as the administrator of the program when it is officially launched early next year.

OABA recognizes that there is a need to balance voluntary changes in production practices with government regulation aimed at not only ensuring clean water, but also instilling confidence in agricultural production practices for Ohio's citizens. Increased regulation should not damage Ohio's agricultural economy – the number one industry in the state that currently provides one in seven jobs for Ohioans – and the ability to grow a crop that must feed a growing world population.

We continue to have concerns with SB 150, which is why we are testifying as an interested party, but we are supportive, in concept, of a fertilizer applicator license. OABA believes a fertilizer applicator license could raise the professionalism of all applicators in the eyes of Ohioans. We encourage the Ohio Department of Agriculture to consider the requirements of a Certified Crop Adviser and other professional agricultural certifications when they promulgate the licensing rules so they are consistent across the board.

I thank you for your time and interest this morning and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.