



**SENATOR SHANNON JONES**  
7th Ohio Senate District

**Senate Civil Justice Committee**  
**Senator Shannon Jones**  
**June 4, 2014**  
**Senate Bill 334**

Good morning, Chairman Coley, Vice-Chair Obhof, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 334, which will address many of the liability and regulatory challenges that affect the agritourism industry.

Agritourism welcomes visitors to take part in operations on a farm; these activities can range from participating in a hayride to picking your own apples. This industry provides a great opportunity for Ohioans, and out of state visitors, to take advantage of our state's unique agricultural landscape while providing our farmers with supplemental income.

This bill will remove many of the regulatory and liability barriers that often deter farmers from offering these activities on their property. The language will address the inherent risks of agritourism activity, such as natural conditions of farmlands, the behavior of wild and domestic animals, and the ordinary dangers associated with a working farm. Agritourism providers will be protected from civil action in cases associated with the inherent risks of a farm.

Additionally, this bill will limit the authority of county boards of commissioners and zoning commissions to regulate agritourism. This legislation will update already existing parameters for zoning agricultural land by including agritourism. County boards will not have the power to prohibit agritourism activities, while maintaining the ability to regulate items such as structure size and parking areas.

Senate Bill 334 also aims to ensure farms that are providing agritourism activities will be able to maintain CAUV (Current Agricultural Use Valuation) status. Previously, CAUV status has been denied to entities providing agritourism activities, such as trail rides. This legislation will ensure the agritourism providers receive this earned property tax status.

Agritourism providers in our state bring a unique cultural experience to all Ohioans. It is important that we foster an environment that encourages farmers to provide agritourism activities. This industry not only provides economic benefits to our state, but it teaches citizens, and out of state visitors, about the value of the agriculture industry. It is our hope that this bill will not only strengthen the already present agritourism industry, but encourage growth.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 334. I will be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.