

House Bill 665

Red Book Revisions: What are the changes?

Before Introduction

- OFMA Long Term Planning Goal
 - In previous OFMA Annual meetings several Red Book changes have been proposed.
 - The OFMA long term planning committee was led by Paul Harris, Bev Fisher and Paul Lease.
- OFMA and ODAg met to review the current laws and craft desired changes.
- Bill was drafted for discussion purposes.
- OFMA met with groups who may be interested in the bill. We made revisions based on that feedback.
- Met with House and Senate members to identify sponsors and champions.

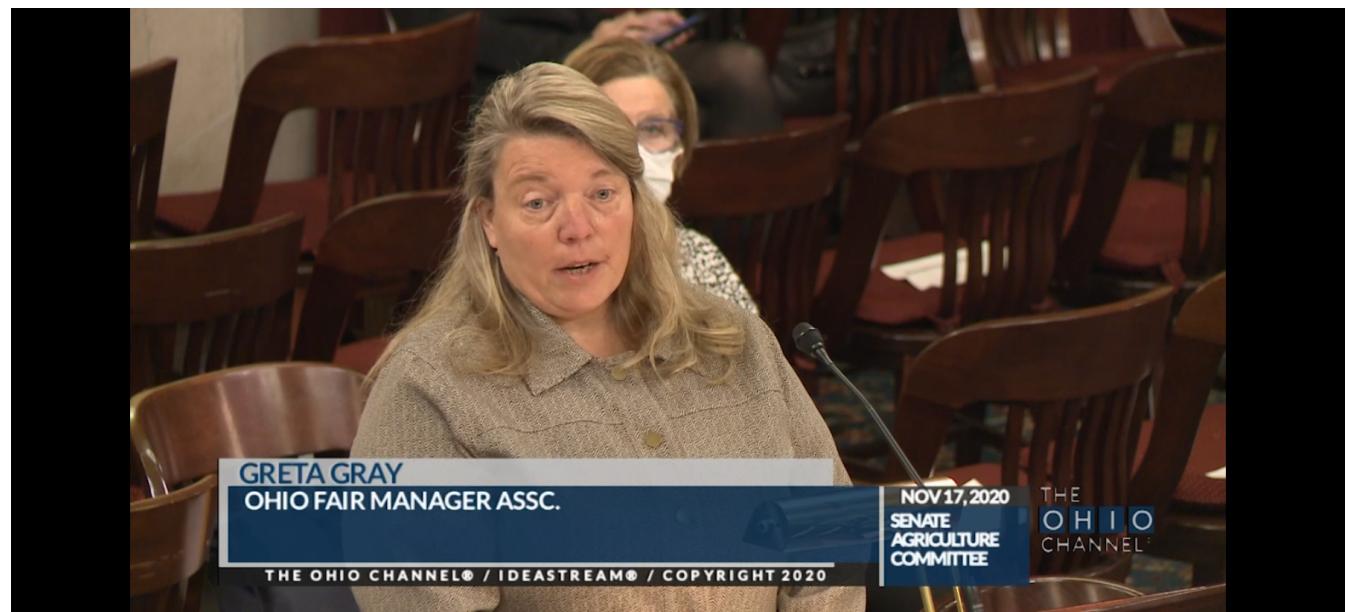
What was the Formal Process?

- House Bill 665 was sponsored by Representatives Don Jones and Shane Wilkin.
- Considered in the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.
- Passed the House of Representatives on June 11, 2020 by a vote of 62-26.
- Considered in the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.
- Passed the Ohio Senate on December 22, 2020 by a vote of 22-9

OFMA Testifies In the House



OFMA Testifies in the Senate



What does the Bill do?

A LOT!

Debt Limits

Increases ability for fairs to take on loans and incur needed debt



Current law limits fairs to having no more debt than 25% of their annual revenue. This has limited fairs too much and doesn't allow them to do much by way of borrowing. The change in the bill instead proposes that the fairs debt obligations payment can't be more than 25% of their annual revenue, averaged over 3 years. The House also added a provision that if the fairgrounds are owned by the county, the fair board will get sign off from the county commissioners to incur the debt.



Beer Sales

HB 665 eliminates the requirement that fairs use the proceeds of beer sales to first pay the insurance on their buildings. We proposed this change because another section of law, 1711.24, requires the county commissions to pay the insurance on the buildings. All buildings on county fair grounds are insured by their respective county commissioners.

Distributions from county commissioners

The Bill has doubled the investment fairs will get from the county commissioners from \$800 to \$1600. We have also removed reimbursement caps on junior fair reimbursement to fairs from the county commissioners. OFMA believe if counties want to support more of the junior fair activities, the law should not prohibit them from doing so.



Harness Racing

There were several changes regarding harness racing at county fairs included in HB 665. These changes allow for some additional flexibility for conducting harness racing. COVID-19 challenges have brought to light some needed changes in this area. These changes were proposed by the Ohio Harness Horsemen Association



- Deleting archaic and outdated sections of code.
- Renumber laws on amusement rides so they have their own unique section of law.
- Rewrites several sections as to not change intent, but have them written in more modern language.
- Removes the requirement that the fairs publish their financial report in a newspaper of general circulation. Instead, fairs will post an announcement of the filing availability of their financial report in the newspaper OR on their website for not less than 2 weeks.
- Removes the “county school superintendent” as an automatic fair board member and specifies that the OSU extension employee is a non-voting member.

Other Provisions

Other provisions

- Requires that the societies' Treasurer, or a person under the supervision of the Treasurer, collects, accounts for, records, deposits, and disburses all funds for the society.
- Specifically permits societies to sell seasonal tickets and passes. Permits societies to sell tickets for fundraisers benefiting the society during the fair.
- Amends to clarify and tighten tax exemptions for property owned by an agricultural society.

What's next?

- After the legislation goes into effect, we will next need to work with the Ohio Department of Agriculture on Rule revisions.
- The Red Book will also need to be officially re-printed with these new, enacted provisions.

Questions?

