

DATE

Ohio State Rep. or Senator NAME

Address

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Dear Rep. or Sen. \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a member of the Ohio Farmers Union and a family farmer in [YOUR LOCATION]. OFU has set as one of its policy priorities for 2020 the beginning of a discussion to set up an Ohio Agricultural Integrator Environmental Indemnity fund.

This is a big issue of the economics of corporate concentration in agriculture versus the microeconomics of the family farm. OFU's policy statement reads:

*"As corporate concentration has taken over the U.S. livestock industry, more and more farmers have found themselves in the position to stay in business by ceding to the equipment, facility and contractual demands of so-called integrators – or large ag businesses that contract for animal production and supply the stock and feed to farmers and demand certain infrastructure by farmers.*

*Integrators in the ag economy have changed the landscape from many family-sized farms, to fewer family farms and more confined animal feeding facilities and confined animal feeding operations.*

*In this changing economic landscape, many farmers are left with the choice to either abandon farming or to grow larger – succumbing to the demands of the integrators to make investments on their land for specialized buildings and equipment that are needed to safely and effectively raise larger numbers of livestock. These investments are often made by the farmer, not the integrator, although the integrator, being a large corporation, sets the terms of engagement between themselves and the farmer.*

*When these farms fail, it's the belief of the Ohio Farmers Union that the environmental cleanup and final safe and environmentally benign disposition of agricultural waste such as manure should be the responsibility of the integrator. Given Ohio's severe water quality issues, especially in the Maumee Watershed, OFU is calling on the Ohio General Assembly to investigate the feasibility of establishing an Ohio Agricultural Integrator Environmental Indemnity fund. While we would leave it to the normal legislative process to establish how such a system would work, we believe that through some regular fee or levy on the integrators, this fund should grow and be administered by the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture in the event that a CAFF or CAFO enters bankruptcy or otherwise fails."*

I would like to know what are your thoughts on the above proposal? Further, I'd like to know whether you would work with OFU leadership on getting the General Assembly investigating this idea and perhaps writing legislation?

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,