



**Testimony In Support of the Commercial Applicator License  
Before the House State and Local Government Committee  
October 17, 2023**

Chair John, Vicechair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Tony Seegers and on behalf of OhioPLANT (Pesticide, Landscape, Agriculture, Nursery, and Turf professionals) I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments to the Committee supporting the commercial applicator license.

OhioPLANT, formerly the Ohio Professional Applicators for Responsible Regulation, was founded in 1984 after egregious legislation was introduced at the state and local levels relative to pre-notification of lawn care applications. The group has since grown to include members from all sectors of the nutrient and pesticide application industries, as well as nurseries and golf courses. OhioPLANT serves as the single voice of the pesticide and fertilizer industries in Ohio. Our members vary from trade associations such as the Ohio Green Industry Association (formerly the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association), the Ohio Pest Management Association, Ohio Lawncare Association, Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, Ohio Agribusiness Association, golf course owners and management associations, as well as companies such as TruGreen, Tigersul, and companies providing extermination services. One of the things that OhioPLANT's varied members have in common is the use of pesticides and the importance of licensed commercial pesticide applicators.

Per the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act ("FIFRA"), no one is allowed to apply restricted use pesticides unless that person has been certified/licensed to be a commercial applicator. A state is authorized by FIFRA to certify applicators of restricted use pesticides only in accordance with a state certification plan approved by the agency. For Ohio, that agency is the Ohio Department of Agriculture ("ODA") and the General Assembly has enacted a comprehensive training and licensing requirement system in Ohio Revised Code Chapter ("R.C.") 921 and the rules promulgated in Ohio Adm. Code Chapter 901:1-11. Specifically, R.C. 921.06 sets forth the commercial applicator license and its requirements, as well as the rules in the administrative code.

Besides the fact that the license is mandated by federal law, there are benefits to having the commercial applicator license, such as continuing education for commercial applicators on products and best management practices. It prevents fly-by-night operators from applying pesticides, ensuring that trained, knowledgeable professionals are assessing a situation and responsibly applying a product in a method that meets that need. Additionally, there is a rigorous scientific process when pesticides are evaluated and registered. Licensure and continuing education requirements keep commercial applicators up to date on the most recent scientific information regarding pesticides and methods of applications that protect the public while fulfilling the role pesticides play.



Additionally, there is the public health aspect of the commercial applicator's role. Pests can carry disease. Think of the apartment complex or restaurant with a cockroach or rodent problem. Commercial applicators will diagnose the situation and perform the treatment needed for the situation, which is based on their training and knowledge of best management practices. These licensed professionals also fight invasive plant and insect species we see in our state, thereby protecting Ohio's native plants and fauna. Further, we do not want unlicensed individuals using restricted use pesticides as it would be dangerous and bad for the environment.

Commercial applicators are vitally important to Ohio's residents, businesses, and farms. Be it treating a home or lawn, apartment, a business, or a golf course, or protecting a farmer's crops, such services cannot otherwise be provided without the license structure we have in place. Also, keep in mind that our statehouse grounds would not be weed and pest free without the commercial applicator license.

On behalf of OhioPLANT's members and the professionals it represents, thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony.