

Where He Stands:

Supporting Agriculture



Agriculture is an essential part of our economy in Senate District 19, which includes Barry, Calhoun and Ionia counties. If you aren't a farmer yourself, chances are good you know someone who makes a living through farming-related work. According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development:

“The food and agriculture industry contributes **\$101.2 billion annually** to the state's economy. Michigan's food and agriculture system is a large portion of this state's workforce. Total employment resulting from this sector is 923,000 which accounts for about 22 percent of the state's employment.

“In 2015, Michigan **exported \$2.8 billion in food and agricultural products**. Michigan's top export markets are Canada, Japan, China, Thailand, and Mexico. Exports help boost farm prices and income, while also supporting over 22,600 Michigan jobs both on and off the farm in

food processing, storage, and transportation. **Every \$1 in export activity generates another \$2.93 in economic activity**, meaning Michigan's total agriculture exports of \$2.8 billion have a local impact of an additional \$8.2 billion.”

I've been a vocal supporter of our farm economy ever since I was first elected to the Michigan House. I'm grateful to have earned the endorsement of AgriPAC (the Michigan Farm Bureau's political action committee) in both of my campaigns. In fact, I've earned **a rating of 100% from the Michigan Farm Bureau** based on my 2015-16 voting record. Just as important, I promise to continue my support for agriculture if elected to the State Senate in 2018!

Below is a summary of just some of the farmer-friendly legislation I have supported recently. (Source: *Michigan Farm Bureau's 2015-16 Voting Record Report*):

Comprehensive Road Funding: The Michigan Legislature approved a \$1.2 billion road funding proposal in November 2015 that was signed into law by Gov. Rick Snyder. Farm Bureau supported the legislation that marked the largest investment in the state's transportation infrastructure in more than 50 years.

Livestock Feed Program Funding: The bill extended the sunset date for livestock dealer licensing fees until Oct. 1, 2019. The fees generate revenue for approximately 25 percent of the MDARD's livestock dealer regulatory program. In addition to regulating livestock dealers, the program prevents deceptive labeling practices and investigates reports of suspected feed-related animal deaths or illness.

Qualified Agricultural Property: House Bill 4677 would amend the General Property Tax Act to allow property owners to separate qualified agricultural land and non-agricultural land when the property changes hands. Subsequently, the agricultural land would retain its taxable value, while the remaining land is subject to the “pop up” tax, adjusting the property to the state equalized value.

Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance (MAEAP) Program Funding: The new law expands the funding base for MAEAP by taxing all fertilizers. It's estimated the change will bring in an additional \$700,000 annually to increase technical assistance and track the environmental benefits of responsible farm practices.

Equine Activity Liability Act Amendment: The legislation added language to provide that an equine activity sponsor or professional would not be held liable for damages unless the sponsor or professional “commits an act or omission that constitutes a willful and wanton disregard for the safety of the participant, and that is a proximate cause of the injury, death, or damage.”

Soil Erosion Control Permits: The legislation exempted certain agricultural-related activities from the requirement of a soil erosion and sedimentation control permit, so long as they do not discharge into a water of the state or off the site. Activities include: construction, fence maintenance / removal, tree or shrub removal, installation of drainage tile, irrigation, or electrical lines, and small ponds under 5 acres.



Dr. Bizon was endorsed by AgriPAC (the Michigan Farm Bureau's political action committee) in both of the last House elections. He is a loyal friend to both farmers and agriculture-related business.