



**Legislature Adjourns for the Year**

On December 18, 2024, the Ohio General Assembly had its final session day for the year. This was a hectic day that went into the early hours of December 19<sup>th</sup>. Any pending legislation that didn't pass has "died" and needs to be reintroduced in 2025, starting the legislative process over. The legislature will return for the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly with their swearing in ceremony on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Below is a summary of issues GOSA tracked over the last year.

**Ohio Expo Commission Appointment**

The GOSA is pleased to announce the OFMA Past President Rod Arter was recently appointed by Governor DeWine to serve on the Ohio Exposition Commission. The mission of the Commission is: To professionally operate and maintain for public benefit a year-round, service-oriented event facility and produce the annual state fair. As the State Fairgrounds undergoes historic upgrades and transformation, we know Mr. Arter will be a great asset to the Commission. The appointment does need consent from the Ohio Senate to be official.

**Tech Cred Applications Open**

The next application period for Ohio employers opened January 2, 2025 and will close on January 31, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. Individuals and training providers interested in learning more about the program, and to find the 2025 application period calendar, can visit [TechCred.Ohio.gov](http://TechCred.Ohio.gov). The National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO) training is an eligible credential under this program and employers can get reimbursement for having employees trained.

**Ride Safety Fee Proposal Moves Forward Through the Advisory Committee**

Ride Category	Permit Fee	Initial Inspection Fee	Total Initial Permitting Cost	Cost Difference
Inflatables	\$100	\$50 - \$100	\$150 - 200	-\$124 to -\$174
Kiddie	\$225	\$100	\$325	\$0
Family	\$225	\$200	\$425	\$40
Major	\$225	\$300	\$525	\$140
Spectacular	\$225	\$400	\$625	\$240
Family/Portable Coaster	\$225	\$1200	\$1445	\$0
Tower	\$225	\$1800	\$2025	\$1640
Large Coaster	\$225	\$4000	\$4225	\$2800

Based on a directive from Ohio legislators, the ODAg's Ride Safety Advisory Council created a subcommittee to study and review ride inspection and permitting fees. Inflatable ride owners have been advocating for fee decreases and some members of the legislature generally agree they are being charged too much. Any changes would need to go through the legislative process before being enacted.

The subcommittee met on March 19<sup>th</sup> and ultimately unanimously voted to send the recommendations to the full advisory council for further review. The full council met on April 25, 2024 and was presented the proposal, but did not take action at the time.

They met again during the Ohio State Fair and the council voted without objection to move forward with presenting their fee structure proposal to the General Assembly. They had a lengthy discussion about proposing the fees be phased in over 2 years. (So, the inflatables would get half their decrease, and other rides would take half their increase, before fully phasing it in). The updated proposal also keeps kiddie rides at neutral, so those fees wouldn't go up.

This proposal was not considered further by the legislature in 2024. We expect this will be debated as part of the 2025 operating budget process.

### **Sunset Review Recommendations**

Every few years, there is a Sunset Review Committee formed to review all Ohio boards and commissions. The committee reviews these bodies and make recommendations as to if these boards still serve a purpose or should be sunset. Some bodies under the purview of ODAg, including the Amusement Ride Safety Advisory Council were reviewed this year. The committee recommended that the council be renewed and will next be reviewed again in 2028. Senator Shane Wilkin, Chair of the Sunset Review Committee, introduced [Senate Bill 335](#) to implement the recommendations. The provisions of SB 335 were largely amended into HB 238, that implements occupational license review recommendations. Action on this bill was completed on December 18th and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

### **Fire Code Changes a Work in Progress**

The State Fire Marshal's office is going through a review of the fire code and planning revisions to the code. The fire code set the minimum standards for the state, but local jurisdictions can go above and beyond the state requirements. GOSA is tracking changes that could impact our member businesses, particularly our mobile food concessions. Of particular concern would be any proposal that required units be retro-fitted with equipment. The initial round of comments were to be submitted to the Fire Marshal by the end of July, 2024. They are currently reviewing that feedback. Another round of comments will be solicited based on changes made as a result of the comments. All information regarding this process, including the initial draft proposal can be found here: <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/code-enforcement/ohio-fire-code/2024-proposed-ohio-fire-code-update>

One significant change being proposed is to create a new permit for mobile food preparation units, replacing the current provisions regarding mobile food units. Under the proposal: Mobile food preparation vehicles are "Vehicles, including but not limited to any motorized vehicles, trailers and hand propelled carts, that are used to cook, prepare or serve food or that contain cooking equipment that produce smoke or grease-laden vapors for the purpose of preparing and serving food to the public. Vehicles intended for private recreation shall not be considered mobile food preparation vehicles."

### **Game Rules Package Finalized**

The Ohio Department of Agriculture released a series of proposed changes to the rules governing games at fairs. Among the changes: increasing from 3 to 5 the number of wins to get prize of choice in trade up games and removing the prohibition on plastic darts in dart games. These changes were recommended and requested by GOSA, so we appreciate their incorporation. The amended rules went into effect March 21, 2024.

### **Food Safety Rules Finalized**

The Ohio Department of Health has for years contemplated a proposal for requiring a person in charge certification for mobile food vendors. The proposal that was finalized in 2024 would be in effect for new mobile units/licensees, not those that are already in operation. (Unless they are implicated in a foodborne illness outbreak). New license holders will need a PIC certified person at each event. So, if you have 4 concessions at a fair, you are only required to have 1 PIC. It was asked how inspectors will know if the unit is old or new and ODH indicated it would be noted on the back of licenses. It was also clarified that failure to meet the requirement would be a non-critical violation.

ODA also filed their rule generally aligning with ODH's proposal. The rules proposal also contains language defining low risk and high-risk mobiles. Based on our interpretation, all GOSA concessions are considered "high risk".

### **Allergen Disclosures Legislation**

Legislation was introduced in 2024 by Representatives Munira Abdullahi and Tom Young regarding food allergen disclosures on menus. [House Bill 558](#) would require all food service operations to denote on their menu (including menu boards) the food items that contain milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, or soybeans. This bill was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee, but no significant action was taken in 2024.

### **Bill Introduced Regarding Imitation Meat and Egg Products**

[House Bill 661](#), sponsored by Representatives Roy Klopfenstein and Jack Daniels, was introduced in the House on September 3, 2024, and would create a framework for regulating imitation meat and egg products in Ohio. As introduced, the bill would require each local board of education, the Department of Education and Workforce, and state institutions of higher education to adopt policies prohibiting the purchase of misbranded meat or egg products and “cultivated-protein food products.”

HB 661 also establishes requirements for the Department of Agriculture, which must inspect food processing establishments if a “credible complaint” is lodged against them for selling misbranded meat or egg products. The bill outlines specifically what is to be considered a misbranded meat or egg product and creates a civil penalty for selling misbranded products.

This bill did not pass in 2025 but could be reintroduced.

### **Bill to Create Agriculture Designations Fails to Pass**

Legislation from Representatives Roy Klopfenstein and Darrell Kick, [House Bill 162](#) was proposed to create several designations that are agriculture related. They are as follows:

- March 21<sup>st</sup> – Agriculture Day
- An end week of February – FFA Week
- October 12<sup>th</sup> – Farmers Day
- The week ending with the second Saturday of March – 4-H Week
- The second full week of November – Ohio Soil Health Week

While the bill passed both chambers with unanimous support, the House did not vote to concur on the changes made in the Senate, so this bill did not make it to the Governor by the end of the year.

### **Minimum Wage Increase Set**

Ohio's minimum wage increased to \$10.70 per hour (up from the current \$10.45) for non-tipped employees and \$5.35 for tipped employees, effective January 1, 2025. The increase applies to employees of businesses with annual gross receipts of more than \$394,000 per year. Since Ohioans passed a constitutional amendment in 2006, the minimum wage increases annually by the rate of inflation.

### **Informal Leadership Vote**

The 4 legislative caucuses met the week of November 18, 2024 to informally select their leadership teams for the new General Assembly. These positions are formally voted on during the legislature’s opening session on January 6, 2024. The House Republicans settled the years long race for Speaker of the House. Current Senate President Matt Huffman sealed the vote and ended up being the only candidate nominated after current Speaker Jason Stephens bowed out during a press conference on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

**House Republican Leadership**

- Speaker Matt Huffman
- Speaker Pro Tempore Gayle Manning
- Assistant Speaker Pro Tempore Phil Plummer
- Majority Floor Leader Rep. Marilyn John
- Assistant Majority Floor Leader Adam Bird
- Majority Whips - Steve Demetriou, Riordan McClain, Nick Santucci and Josh Williams

**House Democrat Leadership**

- Minority Leader Allison Russo
- Assistant Minority Leader Dontavius Jarrells
- Minority Whip Dani Isaacsohn
- Assistant Minority Whip Michele Grim

**Senate Republican Leadership**

- Senate President Rob McColley
- President Pro Tempore Bill Reineke
- Majority Floor Leader Theresa Gavarone
- Majority Whip George Lang

**Senate Democrat Leadership**

- Minority Leader Nickie Antonio
- Assistant Minority Leader Hearcel Craig
- Minority Whip Kent Smith
- Minority Whip Beth Liston

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