

As Introduced

**135th General Assembly
Regular Session
2023-2024**

S. B. No. 226

Senator Johnson

Cosponsors: Senators Cirino, Lang, Schaffer



A BILL

To amend sections 319.202, 5301.256, and 5323.02 of
the Revised Code to extend the law that
prohibits certain governments, businesses, and
individuals from acquiring agricultural land to
certain other property and to name this act the
Ohio Property Protection Act.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 319.202, 5301.256, and 5323.02 of
the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 319.202. Before the county auditor indorses any real
property conveyance or manufactured or mobile home conveyance
presented to the auditor pursuant to section 319.20 of the
Revised Code or registers any manufactured or mobile home
conveyance pursuant to section 4503.061 of the Revised Code, the
grantee or the grantee's representative shall submit, either
electronically or three written copies of, a statement, in the
form prescribed by the tax commissioner, and other information
as the county auditor may require, declaring the value of real
property or manufactured or mobile home conveyed, except that

when the transfer is exempt under division (G) (3) of section 19
319.54 of the Revised Code only a statement of the reason for 20
the exemption and, if the statement involves the transfer of 21
protected property, the affirmations required by division (C) of 22
this section shall be required. Each statement submitted under 23
this section shall contain the information required under 24
divisions (A) and (B) of this section and, if the statement 25
involves the transfer of protected property, the affirmations 26
required by division (C) of this section. 27

(A) Each statement submitted under this section shall 28
either: 29

(1) Contain an affirmation by the grantee that the grantor 30
has been asked by the grantee or the grantee's representative 31
whether to the best of the grantor's knowledge either the 32
preceding or the current year's taxes on the real property or 33
the current or following year's taxes on the manufactured or 34
mobile home conveyed will be reduced under division (A) of 35
section 323.152 or under section 4503.065 of the Revised Code 36
and that the grantor indicated that to the best of the grantor's 37
knowledge the taxes will not be so reduced; or 38

(2) Be accompanied by a sworn or affirmed instrument 39
stating: 40

(a) To the best of the grantor's knowledge the real 41
property or the manufactured or mobile home that is the subject 42
of the conveyance is eligible for and will receive a reduction 43
in taxes for or payable in the current year under division (A) 44
of section 323.152 or under section 4503.065 of the Revised Code 45
and that the reduction or reductions will be reflected in the 46
grantee's taxes; 47

(b) The estimated amount of such reductions that will be reflected in the grantee's taxes;	48 49
(c) That the grantor and the grantee have considered and accounted for the total estimated amount of such reductions to the satisfaction of both the grantee and the grantor. The auditor shall indorse the instrument, return it to the grantee or the grantee's representative, and provide a copy of the indorsed instrument to the grantor or the grantor's representative.	50 51 52 53 54 55 56
(B) Each statement submitted under this section shall either:	57 58
(1) Contain an affirmation by the grantee that the grantor has been asked by the grantee or the grantee's representative whether to the best of the grantor's knowledge the real property conveyed qualified for the current agricultural use valuation under section 5713.30 of the Revised Code either for the preceding or the current year and that the grantor indicated that to the best of the grantor's knowledge the property conveyed was not so qualified; or	59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66
(2) Be accompanied by a sworn or affirmed instrument stating:	67 68
(a) To the best of the grantor's knowledge the real property conveyed was qualified for the current agricultural use valuation under section 5713.30 of the Revised Code either for the preceding or the current year;	69 70 71 72
(b) To the extent that the property will not continue to qualify for the current agricultural use valuation either for the current or the succeeding year, that the property will be subject to a recoupment charge equal to the tax savings in	73 74 75 76

accordance with section 5713.34 of the Revised Code; 77

(c) That the grantor and the grantee have considered and 78
accounted for the total estimated amount of such recoupment, if 79
any, to the satisfaction of both the grantee and the grantor. 80
The auditor shall indorse the instrument, forward it to the 81
grantee or the grantee's representative, and provide a copy of 82
the indorsed instrument to the grantor or the grantor's 83
representative. 84

(C) Each statement submitted under this section involving 85
the transfer of protected property shall contain both of the 86
following: 87

(1) An affirmation by the grantee as to whether the 88
grantee is prohibited from purchasing or otherwise acquiring 89
protected property in this state under section 5301.256 of the 90
Revised Code; 91

(2) An affirmation by the grantor as to whether the 92
grantor is prohibited from purchasing or otherwise acquiring 93
protected property in this state under section 5301.256 of the 94
Revised Code and, if so, whether the protected property that is 95
the subject of the transfer was acquired before the effective 96
date of this amendment. 97

(D) (1) The grantor shall pay the ~~fee~~ following: 98

(a) The fee required by division (G) (3) of section 319.54 99
of the Revised Code; ~~and, in~~ 100

(b) In the event the board of county commissioners of the 101
county has levied a real property or a manufactured home 102
transfer tax pursuant to Chapter 322. of the Revised Code, the 103
amount required by the real property or manufactured home 104
transfer tax so levied. ~~If~~ 105

(2) If the conveyance is exempt from the fee provided for 106
in division (G) (3) of section 319.54 of the Revised Code and the 107
tax, if any, levied pursuant to Chapter 322. of the Revised 108
Code, the reason for such exemption shall be shown on the 109
statement. "Value" means, ~~in the case of any deed or certificate~~ 110
~~of title not a gift in whole or part, the amount of the full~~ 111
~~consideration therefor, paid or to be paid for the real estate~~ 112
~~or manufactured or mobile home described in the deed or title,~~ 113
~~including the amount of any mortgage or vendor's lien thereon.~~ 114
~~If property sold under a land installment contract is conveyed~~ 115
~~by the seller under such contract to a third party and the~~ 116
~~contract has been of record at least twelve months prior to the~~ 117
~~date of conveyance, "value" means the unpaid balance owed to the~~ 118
~~seller under the contract at the time of the conveyance, but the~~ 119
~~statement shall set forth the amount paid under such contract~~ 120
~~prior to the date of conveyance. In the case of a gift in whole~~ 121
~~or part, "value" means the estimated price the real estate or~~ 122
~~manufactured or mobile home described in the deed or certificate~~ 123
~~of title would bring in the open market and under the then~~ 124
~~existing and prevailing market conditions in a sale between a~~ 125
~~willing seller and a willing buyer, both conversant with the~~ 126
~~property and with prevailing general price levels.~~ 127

(3) No person shall willfully falsify the value of 128
property conveyed. 129

~~(D)~~ (E) The auditor shall indorse each conveyance on its 130
face to indicate the amount of the conveyance fee and compliance 131
with this section and if the property is residential rental 132
property include a statement that the grantee shall file with 133
the county auditor the information required under division (A) 134
or (C) of section 5323.02 of the Revised Code. The auditor shall 135
retain the original copy of the statement of value, forward to 136

the tax commissioner one copy on which shall be noted the most recent assessed value of the property, and furnish one copy to the grantee or the grantee's representative.

~~(E)~~ (F) (1) The auditor shall not indorse a conveyance of protected property if the statement submitted under this section does not include both of the affirmations required by division (C) of this section.

(2) The auditor shall refer information about a conveyance of protected property to the county sheriff for investigation and enforcement under division (G) of section 5301.256 of the Revised Code if either of the following apply:

(a) The grantee affirms, or the auditor has reason to believe, that the grantee is prohibited from purchasing or otherwise acquiring protected property in this state under section 5301.256 of the Revised Code.

(b) The grantor affirms, or the auditor has reason to believe, that the grantor has acquired protected property in violation of section 5301.256 of the Revised Code.

(G) The auditor shall not refuse to indorse a conveyance for either of the reasons specified in division (F) (2) of this section.

(H) In order to achieve uniform administration and collection of the transfer fee required by division (G) (3) of section 319.54 of the Revised Code, the tax commissioner shall adopt ~~and promulgate~~ rules for the administration and enforcement of the levy and collection of such fee.

~~(F)~~ (I) As used in this section, "residential":

(1) "Agricultural land" and "protected property" have the

same meanings as in section 5301.256 of the Revised Code. 165

(2) "Residential rental property" has the same meaning as 166
in section 5323.01 of the Revised Code. 167

(3) (a) "Value" means, in the case of any deed or 168
certificate of title not a gift in whole or part, the amount of 169
the full consideration therefor, paid or to be paid for the real 170
estate or manufactured or mobile home described in the deed or 171
title, including the amount of any mortgage or vendor's lien 172
thereon. 173

(b) If property sold under a land installment contract is 174
conveyed by the seller under such contract to a third party and 175
the contract has been of record at least twelve months prior to 176
the date of conveyance, "value" means the unpaid balance owed to 177
the seller under the contract at the time of the conveyance, but 178
the statement shall set forth the amount paid under such 179
contract prior to the date of conveyance. 180

(c) In the case of a gift in whole or part, "value" means 181
the estimated price the real estate or manufactured or mobile 182
home described in the deed or certificate of title would bring 183
in the open market and under the then existing and prevailing 184
market conditions in a sale between a willing seller and a 185
willing buyer, both conversant with the property and with 186
prevailing general price levels. 187

Sec. 5301.256. (A) As used in this section: 188

(1) "Agriculture" has the same meaning as in section 1.61 189
of the Revised Code. 190

(2) "Agricultural land" means land suitable for use in 191
agriculture and includes water on and upon and air space over 192
and above the land and natural products and deposits that are 193

unsevered from the land.	194
(3) "Person" includes all of the following:	195
(a) Individuals;	196
(b) Firms <u>individuals, businesses, countries, criminal enterprises, gangs, cartels, organizations, and governments.</u>	197 198
(4) <u>"Business" includes firms, companies, business trusts, estates, trusts, sole proprietorships, partnerships, general partnerships, limited liability companies, associations, corporations, and any other legal, business, or commercial entities;</u>	199 200 201 202 203
(c) Governments.	204
(5) <u>"Government" means a government other than the government of the United States, its states, subdivisions, territories, or possessions;</u>	205 206 207
(d) Legal or commercial entities, organizations, joint ventures, and nonprofits.	208 209
(6) <u>"Real property" means land and improvements to land and includes water on and upon and air space over and above the land and natural products and deposits that are unsevered from the land.</u>	210 211 212 213
(7) <u>"Protected property" means real property in this state that is any of the following:</u>	214 215
<u>(a) Agricultural land;</u>	216
<u>(b) Located within a twenty-five mile radius of any installation under the jurisdiction of the armed forces, as defined in section 5903.01 of the Revised Code, such as a military base, a camp, or an airport;</u>	217 218 219 220

(c) Located within a twenty-five mile radius of a critical 221
infrastructure facility, as defined in section 2911.21 of the 222
Revised Code. 223

(8) "Control" means the authority, by contract or by law, 224
to direct the affairs and day-to-day operations of a business 225
without the consent of any other person. 226

(9) "Own" means possession of more than fifty per cent of 227
the stock, equity, or other ownership interest of a business. 228

(10) "Foreign adversary" means a country listed on the 229
registry published by the secretary of state under division (H) 230
of this section. 231

~~(B)(1)~~ (B) On or after the effective date of this section, 232
~~no person listed in the registry published by the secretary of~~ 233
~~state under division (G) of this section, and no agent, trustee,~~ 234
~~or fiduciary of such a person~~ amendment, none of the following 235
persons shall, directly or indirectly, purchase or otherwise 236
acquire agricultural land in this state protected property: 237

(1) A person listed on the registry published by the 238
secretary of state under division (H) of this section; 239

(2) A government of a foreign adversary; 240

(3) An individual who is a citizen of a foreign adversary, 241
regardless of whether that individual is a dual citizen of 242
another country that is not a foreign adversary; 243

(4) A business that is headquartered in a foreign 244
adversary; 245

(5) A business that is directly or indirectly owned or 246
controlled by one or more persons described in divisions (B)(1) 247
to (4) of this section, or an agent, fiduciary, or trustee of 248

such persons; 249

(6) Except as otherwise provided in division (D)(3) of 250
this section, an agent, fiduciary, or trustee of a person 251
described in divisions (B)(1) to (5) of this section. 252

~~(2)(C)~~ A person, agent, trustee or fiduciary subject to 253
division ~~(B)(1)~~ (B) of this section that directly or indirectly 254
owns or holds ~~agricultural land in this state as described in~~ 255
~~division (B)(1) of this section~~ protected property before the 256
effective date of this ~~section~~ amendment, may continue to own or 257
hold the ~~agricultural land~~ protected property, but shall not 258
purchase or otherwise acquire, directly or indirectly, 259
~~additional agricultural land in this state that is subject to~~ 260
~~the restriction in division (B)(1) of this section~~ protected 261
property, unless an exception described in division ~~(C)~~ (D) of 262
this section applies. 263

~~(C)~~ (D) ~~The restriction on acquiring agricultural land~~ 264
~~restrictions~~ set forth in division ~~(B)(1)~~ (B) of this section 265
~~does do~~ not apply to any of the following: 266

(1) ~~Agricultural land~~ Protected property acquired by 267
devise or descent. ~~However~~ Except as otherwise provided in 268
division (C) of this section, a person listed in the registry 269
~~published by the secretary of state under division (G)~~ subject 270
to division (B) of this section, or an agent, trustee, or 271
~~fiduciary thereof~~, that directly or indirectly acquires the 272
~~agricultural land~~ protected property, or ~~an~~ a direct or indirect 273
interest in ~~agricultural land~~ protected property by devise or 274
descent ~~on or after the effective date of this section~~ shall 275
divest itself of all right, title, and interest in the 276
~~agricultural land~~ protected property, whether direct or 277
indirect, within two years ~~from~~ after the date of acquisition. 278

~~(2) Agricultural land~~ Protected property that is acquired, 279
directly or indirectly, by a process of law in the collection of 280
debts, by a deed in lieu of foreclosure, pursuant to a 281
forfeiture of a contract for deed, or by any procedure for the 282
enforcement of a lien or claim on the ~~agricultural land~~ protected 283
property, whether created by mortgage or otherwise. ~~Agricultural~~ 284
~~land~~ Except as otherwise provided in division (C) of this 285
section, protected property so acquired shall be sold or 286
otherwise disposed of within two years after title is 287
transferred. ~~Agricultural~~ If the protected property is 288
agricultural land, pending the sale or disposition, the land 289
shall not be used for any purpose other than agriculture, and 290
the land shall not be used for agriculture under lease to an 291
individual, trust, corporation, partnership, or other business 292
entity subject to the restrictions under division ~~(B) (1)~~ (B) of 293
this section. 294

~~(D)~~ (3) Protected property directly or indirectly acquired 295
by agent, fiduciary, or trustee of a person described in 296
divisions (B) (1) to (5) of this section acting in the agent's, 297
fiduciary's, or trustee's personal capacity, if both of the 298
following apply: 299

(a) The agent, fiduciary, or trustee is not a person 300
described in divisions (B) (1) to (5) of this section; 301

(b) The agent, fiduciary, or trustee is not purchasing or 302
otherwise acquiring the property to circumvent the restrictions 303
prescribed by this section. 304

~~(E)~~ A person listed in the registry published by the 305
secretary of state under subject to division ~~(G)~~ (B) of this 306
section, ~~or an agent, trustee, or fiduciary of such a person,~~ 307
shall not directly or indirectly transfer title to or an 308

interest in ~~agricultural land protected property~~ to another 309
person listed in that registry, or an agent, trustee, or 310
~~fiduciary thereof~~ subject to that division, except by devise or 311
~~descent~~ unless an exception described in division (D) of this 312
section applies. 313

~~(E) A~~ (F) Except as otherwise provided in divisions (C) 314
and (D) of this section, a person or an agent, trustee, or 315
fiduciary that directly or indirectly purchases or otherwise 316
~~acquires agricultural land in this state described in division~~ 317
~~(B) (1) of this section, other than by devise or descent, after~~ 318
~~the effective date of this section~~ protected property, and that 319
~~is subsequently added to the registry published by the secretary~~ 320
~~of state under~~ becomes subject to division (G) (B) of this 321
section, shall divest itself of all right, title, and interest, 322
whether direct or indirect, in the agricultural land protected 323
property within two years from after the date the person is 324
~~added to the registry, agent, trustee, or fiduciary becomes~~ 325
subject to division (B) of this section. 326

~~(F) (1)~~ (G) (1) If the secretary of state a county auditor 327
finds or has reason to believe that a person listed on the 328
~~registry published under division (G) of this section, or an~~ 329
~~agent, trustee, or fiduciary thereof,~~ subject to division (B) of 330
this section has acquired, or holds title to, or interest in, 331
~~agricultural land protected property~~ in this state in violation 332
of this section, the secretary of state auditor shall report the 333
~~violation to the attorney general~~ notify the county sheriff of 334
each county in which the protected property is located. The 335
county sheriff shall investigate the allegation, and may, in 336
conducting the investigation, issue subpoenas to compel 337
witnesses to appear to provide testimony or produce records. If 338
the protected property is located in more than one county, the 339

county sheriffs of those counties may investigate the allegation 340
collaboratively. 341

(2) ~~Upon receipt of the report from the secretary of~~ 342
~~state, the attorney general concluding the investigation, if the~~ 343
county sheriff determines that a violation has occurred, the 344
county sheriff shall refer the violation to the county 345
prosecutor. Upon receiving such a referral, the county 346
prosecutor shall initiate ~~commence~~ an action in the court of 347
common pleas of any the county in which the agricultural land is 348
~~located seeking relief in accordance with this section. If the~~ 349
agricultural land protected property is located in more than one 350
~~county, or adjoining tracts of agricultural land are located in~~ 351
~~more than one county, rather than commencing a separate action~~ 352
in each such county, the county prosecutors may commence one 353
consolidated action ~~the county in which the majority of the~~ 354
agricultural land territory of the protected property is located 355
~~shall have. In a consolidated action, the court of common pleas~~ 356
of the county in which the majority of the territory of the 357
protected property is located has territorial jurisdiction over 358
agricultural land all protected property ~~that is the subject of~~ 359
~~the action. The attorney general may initiate an action in the~~ 360
~~court of common pleas of more than one county, if necessary, in~~ 361
~~which case, the court of common pleas in that county shall have~~ 362
~~jurisdiction over the action in matters as it relates to the~~ 363
~~portion of the agricultural land that is located in that county.~~ 364

(3) ~~The attorney general~~ Once the action is commenced, the 365
county prosecutor shall file a notice of the pendency of the 366
~~action with the county recorder of each county in which any of~~ 367
the agricultural land protected property subject to the action 368
~~is located.~~ 369

(4) If the court finds that the ~~agricultural land~~ protected property in question has been acquired or held in violation of this section, it shall do all of the following:

(a) Enter an order so declaring;

(b) File a copy of the order with the county recorder of each county in which ~~any portion of the agricultural land~~ protected property is located;

(c) ~~Declare the agricultural land escheated to the state;~~

~~(d) Order that the escheated agricultural land~~ protected property be sold pursuant to Chapter 2329. of the Revised Code in the same manner as a foreclosure on a mortgage, except that there shall be no opportunity for redemption under section 2329.33 of the Revised Code.

(5) Upon receiving an order under division ~~(F) (4)~~ (G) (4) of this section, the clerk of the court shall notify the governor that the ~~title to the agricultural land~~ protected property is vested in the state to be sold by decree of the court. After the sale, the proceeds ~~of the sale~~ shall be paid as follows:

(a) ~~The proceeds shall first be used~~ First, to pay court costs related to the action or actions ~~initiated pursuant to division (F) (2) of this section;~~

(b) ~~The remaining proceeds, if any, shall be paid~~ Second, to bona fide lien holders, in their order of priority, except for liens that under the terms of the sale are to remain on the property;

(c) Third, ~~to the person whose agricultural land escheated, but only in an amount not exceeding the actual cost~~

~~paid by the person for that agricultural land;~~ 398

~~(c) The proceeds remaining after payments have been made~~ 399
~~pursuant to divisions (F) (5) (a) and (b) of this section shall be~~ 400
~~paid to the general fund of each county in which the~~ 401
~~agricultural land protected property is located, proportionally,~~ 402
~~based on the percentage of the territory located in each county.~~ 403

~~(G) (H) The secretary of state shall compile and~~ 404
~~periodically update at least one time every six months a~~ 405
~~registry of foreign adversaries and other persons that, based on~~ 406
~~the best information available to the secretary of state,~~ 407
~~constitute a threat to the agricultural production, critical~~ 408
~~infrastructure, security, or military defense of this state, or~~ 409
~~the United States, ~~if permitted to acquire agricultural land~~~~ 410
~~~~described in division (B) (1) of this section.~~ The registry shall~~ 411  
~~be published on the secretary of state's web site. The secretary~~ 412  
~~of state shall consult all of the following in compiling the~~ 413  
~~registry:~~ 414

(1) The list of persons determined to be foreign 415  
adversaries by the secretary of commerce of the United States 416  
under 15 C.F.R. 7.4; 417

(2) The terrorist exclusion list compiled by the secretary 418  
of state of the United States in consultation with the attorney 419  
general of the United States under 8 U.S.C. 1182; 420

(3) The list of countries determined by the secretary of 421  
state of the United States that have repeatedly provided support 422  
for acts of international terrorism under 50 U.S.C. 4813(c) and 423  
22 U.S.C. 2780(d); 424

(4) The list of individual and entities designated by, or 425  
in accordance with Executive Order 13224, issued by the 426

president of the United States on September 23, ~~2021~~2001, or 427  
Executive Order 13268, issued by the president of the United 428  
States on July 2, 2002. 429

~~(H)~~ (I) (1) No person is required to determine or inquire 430  
whether another person is or may be subject to division (B) of 431  
this section unless the person is either: 432

(a) Subject to division (B) of this section; 433

(b) A county auditor, county sheriff, county prosecutor, 434  
or trier of fact of a court of common pleas acting in the 435  
person's official capacity as provided in this section or 436  
section 319.302 of the Revised Code; 437

(2) A person that is not subject to division (B) of this 438  
section bears no liability under this section. 439

(3) No title to an interest in real property is invalid or 440  
subject to divestment by reason of a violation of this section 441  
by any former owner or other person holding or owning a former 442  
interest in such real property. 443

(J) The purpose of establishing the restrictions as set 444  
forth in this section is to recognize that the state has a 445  
substantial and compelling interest in protecting its 446  
agricultural production, critical infrastructure, security, and 447  
military defense. 448

**Sec. 5323.02.** (A) An owner of residential rental property 449  
shall file with the county auditor of the county in which the 450  
property is located the following information: 451

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the owner; 452

(2) If the residential rental property is owned by a 453  
trust, business trust, estate, partnership, limited partnership, 454



limited liability company, association, corporation, or any 455  
other business entity, the name, address, and telephone number 456  
of the following: 457

(a) A trustee, in the case of a trust or business trust; 458

(b) The executor or administrator, in the case of an 459  
estate; 460

(c) A general partner, in the case of a partnership or a 461  
limited partnership; 462

(d) A member, manager, or officer, in the case of a 463  
limited liability company; 464

(e) An associate, in the case of an association; 465

(f) An officer, in the case of a corporation; 466

(g) A member, manager, or officer, in the case of any 467  
other business entity. 468

(3) The street address and permanent parcel number of the 469  
residential rental property. 470

(B) The information required under division (A) of this 471  
section shall be filed and maintained on the tax list or the 472  
real property record. 473

(C) An owner of residential rental property shall update 474  
the information required under division (A) of this section 475  
within sixty days after any change in the information occurs. 476

(D) The county auditor shall provide an owner of 477  
residential rental property located in a county that has a 478  
population of more than two hundred thousand according to the 479  
most recent decennial census with notice pursuant to division 480  
(B) of section 323.131 of the Revised Code of the requirement to 481

file the information required under division (A) of this section 482  
and the requirement to update that information under division 483  
(C) of this section. 484

(E) The owner of residential real property shall comply 485  
with the requirements under divisions (A) and (C) of this 486  
section within sixty days after receiving the notice provided 487  
under division (D) of this section, division ~~(D)~~ (E) of section 488  
319.202, or division (B) of section 323.131 of the Revised Code. 489

**Section 2.** That existing sections 319.202, 5301.256, and 490  
5323.02 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 491

**Section 3.** This act shall be known as the Ohio Property 492  
Protection Act. 493