

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to support this legislation. As farming becomes far more technical in nature, we need to be able to diagnose and repair equipment in a timely and cost-effective manner. As you know, farming often runs on razor thin margins both financially and with regard to time. Dollars and minutes count in farming. One frustration we often experience is the need to quickly understand and repair a breakdown with our equipment. Farm equipment today is just as reliant on computers as cars and trucks. GPS is used extensively and with great results to help us minimize time and inputs on the land. This technology alone saves many gallons of diesel fuel and many tons of fertilizer and chemicals by allowing precision placement and less overlapping on fields. To say there is no going back from this technology is an understatement. The future of farming is as defined by these technologies as when we shifted from horse and ox to mechanized tractors. This is how profound the impact is and how important it is for farmers to be able to keep it operating.

Legislation to allow farmers to access diagnostic software, documents, and repair manuals for electronic aspects of our equipment is just as important as any other component of the same machine. Often, I am able to see a warning light or an error message only to be required to call dealer support: a costly and time-consuming process. This very spring, I had an error which turned out to be a simple cord working is way unplugged. Unfortunately, after paying for a service technician to drive to my farm (an hour and a half each way) I got an initial bill for \$790 for the five-minute job of plugging in a wire. The dealership ultimately took 50% off the bill but \$395 is still a hefty price for a simple bit of work. Often, drivers of cars and trucks see a "service" light appear on their dash and can stop into a myriad of local repair shops or parts retailers and have their problem diagnosed for free. Whether or not they repair the item themselves, they at least have free or low-cost diagnosis of their vehicle's issue. Farmers are asking for the same consideration. Farm equipment manufacturers have suppressed release of simple diagnostic software and manuals that are commonly available in other sectors of the economy. Why? Because they can and it is profitable for them to do so. They have a niche market that they are easily able to exploit because competition within manufacture and particularly between dealers and local repair shops is nearly gone. The prospect of ending hours to days of waiting and hundreds to even thousands of dollars of repairs bills is, to say the least, helpful and a game changer for me as a farmer. I hope that the legislature is able to advance this legislation that will greatly benefit myself and thousands of other family farmers who rely on these technologies every day on their farms.

Thank you,

Mark Metz

Farmer in Ida, Michigan