

JOHN SPIROS

State Representative • 86th Assembly District

Assembly Bill 54

May 16, 2017

Testimony from Rep. Spiros

Hello, and thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture for allowing me to have the opportunity to share my testimony with you today regarding Assembly Bill 54, relating to seed potato certification.

Assembly Bill 54 would require those who grow more than 5 acres of potatoes in a year to only plant certified seed potatoes. This program currently exists, but is voluntary. The certification program helps Wisconsin's commercial potato industry to maintain quality and disease-free seed potatoes, but that assurance is limited to those who are a part of the voluntary program. This requirement would help prevent the spread of serious potato diseases.

As I mentioned earlier, potato production is an important industry in the state of Wisconsin, providing thousands of jobs and generating billions of dollars for our state's economy. These changes are important for ensuring potato farmers can market and sell their potatoes to commercial buyers. This legislation also has the support of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, as well as potato growers across the state.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to share testimony in support of this bill, and I welcome any questions.