



**Written Testimony of Daniel B. Fisher, Senior Vice President
Associated Equipment Distributors
Before the House Corporations Committee**

Hearing on “Agricultural Equipment Right to Repair Act” (H 7535)

Chair Solomon, Vice Chairs O’Brien and Caldwell, and Committee Members, Associated Equipment Distributors (AED) appreciates the opportunity to offer this testimony in conjunction with the Commerce, Finance and Policy Committee hearing on H 7535 (“Agricultural Right to Repair Act”).

AED is the international trade association representing companies that sell, rent and service construction, farm, energy, forestry and industrial equipment. Our members, which are predominantly small-medium-sized, family-owned businesses, employ workers across Rhode Island, providing well-paying jobs and serving as a positive force within communities throughout state (attached is a list of AED member locations in Rhode Island).

AED and our members operating in Rhode Island have significant concerns with H 7535 as currently drafted.

At the outset, it’s important to point out that H 7535, as drafted, is not limited to agriculture equipment. The current language could encompass any piece of machinery or equipment used in agricultural applications or on farms, including skid-steer loaders, track loaders, wheel loaders and backhoe loaders, to name a few. Consequently, the ramifications of the legislation go well-beyond the agriculture sector, impacting companies involved in construction, landscaping, material handling and forestry, as equipment can be used in many different applications depending on the customer.

If enacted, H 7535 will upend the current equipment distribution and service model that equipment dealers and our customers have relied upon for efficient, cost-effective, and exemplary repairs and maintenance. AED members invest significant resources to recruit, train and develop skilled service technicians to serve in well-paying careers at equipment dealerships. Importantly, these individuals also ensure that repairs and maintenance is completed in a manner that ensures safety for operators and the integrity of the machinery’s emission protections system. Tractors and heavy equipment are more complex than passenger vehicles and consumer electronics, and the likelihood of improper repairs causing significant injury and damage are much greater.

AED members currently make available parts, tools and service manuals to customers and independent repair providers. Customers that would prefer to complete repairs on their own or through a third-party have that option. Equipment dealers maintain significant parts inventory and for many, parts and service revenue are what allows the business to remain viable.

It is also important for policymakers to recognize a key difference between equipment sold by AED members and other products, such as consumer electronics. Heavy machinery has a significantly longer life cycle that may be jeopardized by inexpert repairs. In fact, equipment will oftentimes be sold to a customer, traded-in when the customers purchase a new machine, and subsequently, either resold or rented. Modifications to equipment can jeopardize its durability, which in turn can also have a negative environmental impact as machinery may need to be discarded and is deemed unusable prematurely.

In conclusion, “right to repair” legislation applied to the equipment industry is based on a false narrative that customers are unable to fix their machinery. H 7535 is truly a solution in search of a problem that could put Rhode Island equipment distributors out of business.

Thank you for the Committee's consideration of my testimony.

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AED's Rhode Island Dealer Locations

Chadwick-Baross, Inc.
C.N. Wood Co., Inc.
Milton CAT

West Warwick
Johnston
Cranston