



What is “Right to Repair” for Farm Equipment?

Several years ago, special interest activists began to promote legislation in the Ag sector that is commonly labeled and misrepresented as “Right to Repair.” Proponents state that they simply want the resources necessary to perform repairs of products such as combines and tractors, along with everything from cell phones to computers. The truth, however, is that these activists are actually after more than just repair resources! “Right to Repair” legislation is usually an attempt to gain access to parts at wholesale prices and otherwise inaccessible machine software that would allow the illegal and/or unsafe modification of equipment.

Special Interest Groups Driving Right to Repair Legislation have Two Primary Motives:

- 1) Special interest groups want the government to mandate that farm equipment manufacturers provide all manuals, diagrams, software updates, and similar information “free of charge” to equipment owners and anyone who claims to be an independent repair provider. **They also want to require manufacturers to provide all service and repair parts to the same individuals at wholesale or dealer cost!**
- 2) Special interest groups want the government to mandate that manufacturers provide access to proprietary intellectual property, access to engine and equipment control units, access to software that governs safety and environmental controls, and ultimately access to embedded code.

Is it reasonable for the government to force private businesses to provide goods or services “free of charge” to the public? Is it reasonable for the government to force manufacturers to provide service and repair parts to the public at wholesale, or dealer cost, as these activists suggest?

The answer is obvious. This concept is exactly the same as having big government force a sawmill in Oregon to bypass Lowe’s and sell lumber directly to home builders...at the same price Lowe’s would have paid. If Lowe’s is not allowed to make a profit how long do you suppose they would remain in business? It would also be similar to forcing farmers to avoid using their local elevator and requiring them to sell their wheat directly to the flour mill. The entire premise behind this legislation is a direct attack to the free market, capitalistic model that America was built upon.

Farmers Have the Right to Repair Their Equipment, but Not Tamper with Embedded Code.

Without question, farmers have the right to repair their equipment. Farmers can freely choose to conduct their own repair work, have their dealer perform repairs, or have an independent provider perform repairs. However, neither farmers, dealers, nor others should be allowed to modify proprietary embedded code. Modifying software can create a myriad of problems such as equipment failing to meet customer expectations, exceeding EPA emissions levels that may negatively affect our environment, or creating an unsafe environment for those operating the equipment and those near the equipment. Modifications also create unknown liability issues for the individuals modifying the code, dealers who take modified equipment in trade for resale, and the subsequent owners of a modified unit.

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Right-to-Repair Issues within the Used Farm Equipment Market can be Hidden, Expensive, and Dangerous.

There is another Right-to-Repair issue that lurks within the used farm equipment market, namely, the lack of ability to track or create a history of modifications to equipment. For example, a person could “tune” a tractor’s engine from 400 hp to 475 hp, run it for several hundred hours, tune it back to 400 hp, and then trade it in to a dealer or sell it at auction. That engine was operated well outside of manufacturer specifications, and the integrity of the engine and other machine components could be severely compromised. As a result, the farmer who later purchases that tractor could have the engine “blow up” or experience a different catastrophic failure due to the unknown modification.

In addition, if the modification does become known, the manufacturer has the right to void the warranty on the engine and drivetrain components. This could leave the innocent farmer who purchased that equipment paying for a new engine that could cost, for example, up to \$70,000 on a late model tractor.

The Farm Equipment Industry Actively Supports Customers’ Right to Repair.

As farm equipment has become more sophisticated, our industry has worked to make available the tools and resources that farmers need to conduct their own repairs. That commitment includes access to manuals, special tools, on-board diagnostic tools via in-cab display or wireless interface, electronic diagnostic service tools, parts, software applications, and more. Learn more at: www.r2rsolutions.org and www.illegaltampering.com.

Right to Repair Legislation is Unnecessary and Does Not Benefit Farmers.

The fact is, manufacturers and dealers currently make available the repair resources necessary to conduct the repair of today’s modern farm equipment. These resources, provided proactively by manufacturers and dealers, make legislation wholly unnecessary for farm equipment IF the goal is simply to gain access to the information and tools necessary to repair equipment.

An equipment dealership’s success is tied directly to the success and profitability of its farming partners. Right to Repair legislation does not benefit farmers. It damages the ability of dealers and manufacturers to effectively promote the welfare and profitability of their farm customers.

Right to Repair Legislation has Failed Across the Nation. Let’s Keep it That Way.

Right to Repair legislation has been introduced in legislatures around the nation for several years. Within the last couple of years, similar legislation was introduced in 23 states. None of it has passed. Let’s make sure it stays that way.



We are committed to ensuring that farmers have the resources and information they need to repair today’s modern farm equipment.

Your questions and perspectives on the issue are valuable. Please contact Pioneer EDA President/CEO Matthew Larsgaard at 701-293-6822 or matthew@pioneereda.com.

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