

House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture Development and Natural Resources

HB 49

Interested Party Testimony

Dr. Peggy Berry, Registered Nurse

March 22, 2017

As a nurse for over 30 years, with clinical and occupational health experience, I can tell you that protecting public health without all the information on potential chemical exposures is nearly impossible.

Although we aren't privy to all of the chemicals fracking companies use, we know there are at least 65 hazardous chemicals linked to blood, kidney, heart, and liver damage after prolonged exposure. These chemicals are no laughing matter.

When these chemicals are contained, all is fine. But with all human endeavors, the worst can happen -- an accident, explosion, or spill - with chemicals exposure to our air, rivers, and streams. These streams provide drinking water to Ohio families and chemical exposure occurs to those people unfortunate enough to live nearby.

As a registered nurse, I know that our health is intertwined with the water we drink. Unfortunately right now in Ohio drinking water operators don't have access to all of the information needed to know whether, during an oil and gas spill, chemically exposed water is being brought into water uptakes and delivered through the kitchen faucet.

This chemical reporting loophole prevents the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the industry from sharing ALL chemical information with first responders, state agencies, and drinking water operators in the case of emergencies.

What we are asking is very common sense. To be clear, we are not asking oil and gas companies to broadly share trade secret chemical with the entire public. We are asking that oil and gas companies share all chemical information with those who need it to protect the public's health in the case of disasters such as spills, emergencies, and fires.

We need first responders, drinking water utilities and state agencies to have this information when making critical public health decisions for Ohio families.

We are asking that this committee support an amendment to HB 49 that would allow first responders, drinking water utilities and state agencies to receive ALL chemical information during an oil and gas emergency.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to the committee. I'd be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.