

House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture Development and Natural  
Resources  
HB 49  
Interested Party Testimony  
Rebecca Bowen  
March 22, 2017

I understand that the oil and gas industry brings jobs to southeast Ohio, where we need them, and I am not opposed to it. But as this development continues to grow, I ask you not to forget communities and families like mine. I would like to tell you what happened to my family since the occurrence of the June 2014 Eisenbarth well pad fire.

My husband and I have been married and have lived on Sykes Ridge for 34 years, and I have lived all my life with no problems like this. We have tried to stay healthy, take vitamins, eat right. Then right after the fire, everything seemed to change.

Early in the morning, we thought someone was beating on our door. Then we saw the smoke as it was rolling. The explosions were like dynamite going off. It happened on Long Ridge. The smoke started rolling across the ridges. Not only did the smoke follow the wind, but the chemicals also did.

The next morning, it smelled like chlorine bleach and burnt plastic. Like a sweet Pine Sol smell was in the air. The smoke had left a black film all over everything. We were working outside that day. I remember going inside because the smell got too bad.

The next day we all got sick. Our throats burned and were sore. I threw up and had no appetite for weeks, months. The indigestion was really bad. The migraines were unbearable.

We went to the ER but all they could do was treat the symptoms. It was a temporary fix, and then the migraines would come right back. We were dizzy and disoriented at times. This lasted months, now years, later.

Still today my whole family has breathing trouble. We all see pulmonary doctors. We are all on breathers multiple times a day. We all have

asthma now. Some are worse than others. We were told the chemicals in the air melted our air pathways.

My husband is still having migraines, indigestion, and a sore throat and cough. He went to the Canton pulmonary doctors. When they gave him a cat scan, spots showed up. Six months later the spots doubled. The time has come when we have to get results again, and I can't begin to tell you how scared we are because he's weaker and his breathing has worsened.

My daughter has indigestion all the time and migraines. She has nodules in her throat. Both her hair and mine fall out really badly at times. My daughter also had a baby girl, a preemie. She weighed 3 pounds at birth, due to preeclampsia.

After the fire half of my laying hens died, a pet turkey also died. Around my house and my dad's, we might have just a handful of birds left.

We don't know what chemicals we were exposed to that lead to all of these health problems. But I do believe that if all of the chemical information had been available quickly to firefighters and other emergency responders, then damage to our family and our community could have been lessened.

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.