



Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Opponent Testimony – House Bill 393

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Chairman Landis, Vice Chair Hagan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer opponent testimony on HB 393. My name is Amalie Lipstreu and I am the Policy Coordinator for the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association.

OEFFA is an organization of approximately 5,000 members and 10,000 supporters that has been advocating for sustainable agriculture for close to 40 years. We also operate one of the oldest and largest USDA accredited organic certification agencies in the United States.

Approximately one half of our farmer members are certified organic. Many are familiar with the USDA organic label and have some understanding of what that means. Let me share with you two things.

First- Organic food production has seen double digit growth in the past decade or more. This is a bright spot in American Agriculture in that even with depressed commodity prices, organic is a profitable and growing market. The state of Ohio is seventh in the nation in the number of organic farmers (575) and that number is up 24%. Since 2015 our organic sales increased by more than 30% and organic cropland in production grew by 11%.

Second- Organic farmers minimize the use of off-farm inputs. That means that they build on farm fertility and utilize cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster the cycling of resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity". It is a holistic approach to farming that moves well beyond the absence of synthetic chemical inputs and incorporates prerequisites of water quality, soil quality and much more.

The USDA National Organic Program and USDA accredited certifiers- such as OEFFA, are required to make sure these producers keep their land free of prohibited inputs. OEFFA has worked for more than three years with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, state agencies, legal organizations and pipeline companies to prevent and mitigate the damage from unconventional nature gas extraction and potential decertification of organic farms. House bill 393 has the potential to thwart the growth of this growing industry and its positive economic and environmental impacts to Ohio's rural communities.

The "brine" from UNGA includes unknown combinations of proprietary chemicals and naturally occurring radioactive materials. Given the makeup of these fluids, we question the ability to ensure

they are free from chemicals that cannot be tested for by the public- including organic certification agencies. Allowing an applicant "...demonstrate to the chief that the intended use of the commodity is *not expected* to result in damage or injury to public health, safety, or the environment" is not a sufficient standard.

Spreading this fluid, that has any possibility of including radioactive materials and unknown chemical products, where runoff can enter farm fields and food production areas is not only a concern for the potential decertification of organic farms. It is also a food safety and public health concern for our rural communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we respectfully ask a reconsidering of this bill.