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Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 723

Chairman Landis, Vice Chair Hagan, Ranking Member O'Brien and Members of the House Energy and Natural Resource Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 723.

House Bill 723 intends to limit the number of injection wells to 23 within any county in the state of Ohio.

Currently, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is the sole permitting agent for injection wells in the state of Ohio. Injection wells are wells that, under pressure, receive fluid or brine by product from fracking operations. To many, this fluid is considered toxic but it is universally understood that this brine fluid can be more than 6 times saltier than sea water.

Injection of brine fluid under pressure can and has caused earthquakes, additionally the mishandling of this fluid above ground has caused negative impacts to wild life, streams, and plant life. The Mahoning Valley and Trumbull County has experienced a number of those incident in recent years. ODNR has a robust regulatory structure but with all the checks and balances prior to full operation, it may take up to 6 months to see if that well is going to perform as expected.

To repeatedly put a community under the pressure and anxiety of not knowing what damages can befall them, relative to injection wells, is egregious and unjust. It is completely unnecessary to take these risks over and over again, when we have a number of operating wells with proven performance. The goal here, is to give constituents and municipalities their voices back, by allowing them to determine if they want new wells in their communities. Thank you for your consideration of HB 723 and I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Incident History:

- December 2011- McDonald, OH: 4.0 Magnitude Earthquake
 - Reports claim the effects could be felt “from Cortland to Canton to Canfield”, in the Shenango Valley in PA and as far as Buffalo, NY
- August 2014- Weathersfield: AWMS Failed Wells
 - By this time the AWMS well had been shut down 3 times in 2 years because of “possible evidence [existing] linking the AWMS injection operation to a recent 2.1 seismic event”
- October 2018- Weathersfield: AWMS Failed Injection Wells
 - ODNR determined that if the AWMS well continued to operate, it could result in higher magnitude earthquakes
- March 2015- Vienna: Brine leak
 - ODNR found “with a great degree of certainty” that the Vienna well in question was the source of leak of 2,000 gallons of brine fluid
 - Wildlife such as fish and turtles were found dead near the area of the spill