

September 9, 2019

To Ohio Lawmakers:

This letter is in reference and support of HB288 to eliminate eminent domain power of Park Districts. As a resident and property owner in Stark County, Ohio that has been verbally threatened by several board members of Stark Parks concerning eminent domain of my active and productive farm land I have real-life experience with this situation. Unfortunately, most park districts and trail systems have very different thoughts and ideas of the "best use" of rural lands versus most land owners.

In my situation the proposed trail site would: 1. Divide my property nearly in 1/2 (presently 340+ contiguous acres) 2. The trail would serve as a "iron curtain" preventing horizontal drilling on my property at some point 3. Would prevent me access to multiple pastures and fields once a trail is constructed.

Based on my experience as an adjacent landowner to property owned by this same park district at a different site - I have witnessed a complete disregard for noxious weed proliferation, lack of maintaining of creek beds that has caused a backup of water on my property that has inhibited water flow through my systematic tile discharge system that had greater then 6" of free board prior to them acquiring the property from a retiring farmer, and continued trespassing by individuals on my private property (prior to the establishment of a trail on their property there was generally no access to my remote property.)

After attending a number of community meetings ranging from Park sponsored to "Concerned Land Owners" to Farm Bureau it is absolutely clear that both sides will not agree on this issue. Parks praise the trails for increasing property values (as a farmer I want to pass property on to the next generation - not sell it and/or pay higher taxes on an annual basis), encouraging the prevention of further natural gas and oil exploration (as a land owner this might allow my next generation to continue to farm), and "reclaiming" more natural green space {a.k.a.- no maintenance of previously productive ground} (previous generations as well as myself have worked hard in improving the productivity of the ground to not only make a living but also feed the masses).

I encourage your support of HB288 to eliminate the power of eminent domain of Park Districts!

Sincerely

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