

To: The Public Utilities Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives
Chairman Callender
Vice-Chair Wilkin
Ranking Member Smith
Members of the Committee

I am not surprised that we are here today having this discussion on what can only be an attack on our democracy by outside interests. SB 33 is an overreach by some of our elected officials to reinforce the economic interests of the oil, gas and plastics industries at the expense of our freedom to assemble and dissent. Existing law covers the need for safety and security around critical infrastructure and does not need special provisions written into the law to benefit a specific group of industries, and will limit the abilities of communities to protect themselves from the accompanying environmental, health and safety risks that are inherent to the development of these particular industries.

It is no secret that oil and gas development, the raw source for plastic carry along with it considerable environmental, health and safety risks to the communities where it occurs, and large numbers of Ohioans oppose it. We have seen numerous incidents, events, studies and accidents that attest to it. No new news there. What is news however is the Peoples' House stepping in at the behest of these well-funded lobbyists and donors to limit our rights as citizens

The proposed penalties in the bill are excessive, target innocent non-profits unfairly, prevent clergy from serving their congregations and are meant to intimidate, plain and simple. They mean to intimidate citizens with these unusual threats, intimidate us into silence. We will not accept being a "sacrifice zone" for the enrichment of a few.

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