

Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
Greg Pace Testimony opposing SB 33
October 9th, 2019

Good afternoon committee and Chairman Callender,

My name is Greg Pace and I am a resident of Columbus. I testified in March about this bill in senate committee, reflecting on some of the most egregious incidents in Ohio over the past few years when oil and gas pipeline and production activities resulted in huge environmental damage, people having to evacuate their homes, and loss of wildlife.

In Ohio, the attention and concern since the hydrofracking initiative began in 2011 has been on risks associated with localized contamination of water, soil, and air resources. Eight years later, we are seeing evidence and studies come forward that are confirming our fears, especially regarding air pollutions that are making people sick in rural Ohio. From the standpoint of what Ohio residents have to deal with in terms of health concerns, the oil and gas industry is allowed to continue to operate with no real changes toward cleaning up their act under the state's regulatory environment.

But the real elephant in the room is that the greenhouse gases released by the oil and gas industry, the very industry that has lobbied for this protest and dissent stifling bill, are a huge contributor in preventing our society from focusing on curbing our part in contributing to what consensus of opinion through data shows to be the largest crisis humanity has ever faced – climate change and the myriad destructive changes that are already being seen as ramping up through the warming of our planet's surface environment.

When people protest this activity, it is out of real concern for our health and future. This bill from the subversive ALEC organization completely negates our concern, and instead acts from the opposite end of the spectrum to protect the so-called rights of the oil and gas industry. If passed, it will demonstrate unmistakably that the Ohio legislature does not have concern for the health of our residents and the rights of these residents to use a constitutional right and an American tradition - to protest when we can't stop our government from allowing bad things to happen to our residents and resources! It will demonstrate to the residents of Ohio that you are on the wrong end of Ohio's future, and, much more damaging, is that you will stifle meaningful dissent – a core right that makes America GREAT!

You are crippling our future to a clean, much safer energy future, as other states explode in solar and wind manufacturing and infrastructure. But at the same time, you are attempting to rob American citizens of our right to dissent this egregious mode of taking us the way of the dinosaurs.

Ohio does not need more criminal penalty carve outs lobbied for by specific industries – we need vision to move into the future where our childrens' grandchildren will have food to eat, water to drink, and breathable air that will not make them ill. Stop wasting our future resources away. That will stop the protests you are attempting to make go away by criminalizing us.

You were elected into your offices as upholders of our republic – now it's up to you to act in the interests of all of your constituents and our future.