

Ohio House Public Utilities Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 29th 2020

SB 33 Opponent Testimony

Dear Chairman Callender, Vice-Chair Wilkin, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee,

I would like to take this opportunity to strongly oppose Senate Bill 33. Considering the high volume of opposing testimony from various stakeholders throughout Ohio, it is clear that the general public, those who will not be enriched by extractive pipeline industries, are against this legislation.

Senate bill 33 is an insidious attack on the American right to protest. It is also totally unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer dollars, since property damage and trespassing are already illegal. Furthermore, similar legislation in other states, like South Dakota, have been struck down. It is fiscally irresponsible to pass legislation that is sure to be taken to court.

Using fear of attacks on “critical infrastructure” to take dampen our civic engagement is an egregious abuse of law. Increasing the penalties from misdemeanors to felonies and increasing fines serves only to exacerbate the criminal justice crisis we have. The language of the bill also remains vague and unspecific. All of this protects corporations at the cost of people, your constituents, who will surely remember the role this body will play.

This is a highly targeted bill, and is a scare tactic to keep whistleblowers of wrongdoing quiet and passive. The House will decide whether or not they will protect our rights. Senate bill 33 is a wasteful piece of legislation made to protect the powerful industries at the cost of everyday people.

Sincerely,
Andrea Chu