Dear Chairman Thompson, the Ohio General Assembly, and audience,

My name is Hannah Fithen. I am an ordinary citizen, if you will, living in Columbus, Ohio. But in America my opinion matters and I thank you, Chairman Thompson, the Ohio General Assembly, for your time and the opportunity to submit my personal testimony on HB49, our state budget bill.

I, like many others and perhaps yourself, love exploring our diverse state. With each breath and step on each town visit or nature hike I hope we all are able to appreciate, cherish our clean water and air, our flora and fauna. I hope we all want to see this environment protected for present and future Ohioans.

I have done my research. Today, I am writing to you to give my written testimonial in support of funding for environmental matters that include, but are not limited to:

**1.** Strong protections for Ohio communities from oil and gas operations

This would mean finally ending the chemical reporting loopholes exploited by oil and gas companies.

Many in my own family members live in what many consider to be front-line fracking communities*.* I fear for their immediate safety and health when methane, and other undisclosed chemicals are so freely wasted or pumped into the land and air they live, work and play near.

**2.** Adequate funding to eradicate toxic algae in Lake Erie and other water ways

OurGovernor, in his recent algae-reduction plan, has an entire fact sheet on the issues involved with tackling algae in Lake Erie and thus ensure water quality protection. We just need the proper funding to make this plan a beautiful reality.

**3.** Zero tolerance against lead and toxins in Ohioans' drinking water

We need increased monitoring of contaminants *and* improved access to public water system monitoring data to ensure transparency and accountability to our Ohio communities.

No company should be allowed to put our state at risk without a chance for citizens, peer-reviewed scientists and environmental organizations to evaluate, and fairly protect their state.

**4.** Ohioans' right to clean, efficient, and affordable energy choices

We would love to see the General Assembly fund the modernization of Ohio's electricity grid. This will provide energy savings, cost savings, CO2 and other pollutant reductions, and give Ohioans greater control over how we use energy.

In addition, our Governor’s proposed budget includes implementing new technologies such as smart meters, automated circuits and sensors to provide consumers more control over their electric usage. This would be great for all parties.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hannah Fithen

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