

**Senate Finance Subcommittee on General Government and Agency
Review
Am. Sub. HB 49
Interested Party Testimony**

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Mark Sommers, Assistant Chief
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Cumberland Trail Fire District**

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My name is John Slavik, and I am the newly appointed Fire Chief at Cumberland Trail Fire District in St. Clairsville, Ohio. Although I was only recently appointed fire chief, I have been a firefighter for the last 40 years. Prior to being appointed Fire Chief, I was a lieutenant at the Washington DC Fire Department where I spent many years working on the Hazardous Material Task Force.

As firefighters, we are often the first people on the scene of an emergency event. When we arrive on scene, we have to be able to quickly assess the situation and come up with an action plan that mitigates the risks to both ourselves and others. Our goal is always to handle the emergency as quickly and effectively as possible. Unfortunately, there are times where we run into roadblocks or have a difficult time accessing certain pieces of information. When this happens, it can slow us down significantly and cause us and others to incur unnecessary health and safety risks.

Today, we would like to bring to your attention one specific roadblock that is written into Ohio law. As you may already be aware, Ohio's oil and gas law allows oil and gas companies to withhold the identities of all chemicals they consider to be "trade secrets". This law is intended to protect the business interests of the oil and gas companies. The problem is, there is no provision in the law that allows or requires these producers to disclose this information to emergency first responders or other public health officials during emergency events.

What this means for us, and other first responders in the state of Ohio, is that whenever there is an oil and gas related emergency event, such as a spill or well pad fire, we are not given access to the full list of chemicals on site. As a result, we don't know how dangerous these trade-secret protected chemicals are and we don't know exactly what measures we need to take to clean them up. This means that it can take us hours or days longer than it should to clean up or take care of the emergency.

Since we are the first people on the scene, and we are charged with the responsibility of protecting our communities from disaster situations, we need to be given access to a comprehensive list of chemicals during emergency events. That is why we are asking that you close the chemical reporting loophole in Ohio law and require oil and gas producers to provide emergency first responders, drinking water utilities, and other public health officials with a full list chemical additives during emergency events.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony,

Chief John Slavik
Assistant Chief Mark Sommers
Assistant Chief Tim Hall