

Ohio Senate Finance - General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee

Public Testimony on Am. Sub. H.B No.49

**Kathryn Hanratty
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Good Morning Chairman Jordan, Vice Chair O'Brien and committee members. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. My Name is Kathryn Hanratty I am from Chardon, Ohio and a member of the Group Protect Geauga Parks, a non-profit, grassroots group dedicated to the conservation of nature within our parks. I am here today to ask you to remove language added to the State Budget Bill Am. HB-49 (line 21238 - 21245) which would allow forced unitization for drilling and fracking of our local and county parks.

Our parks are lands set aside for the future. Places where children can discover the many beauties of nature, and hopefully, someday introduce their children to the same wonders. Our local and county parks are vital to all residents. They offer places of relaxation and respite, places for the gathering of families, places for exercise and recreation, places of peace and the opportunity to breathe fresh air. How many of us have felt the difference in the way the air feels and smells deep in the woods of a park? The recharge offered by local parks helps to clean our air and filter our water. The stability of our local parks is vital to the stability of our neighborhoods and the value of our homes.

I believe that allowing forced unitization of our park land for drilling and fracking near our local and county parks will have negative consequences for the health and safety of all of our citizens. Bringing more of this industrial process into closer proximity to our residential neighborhoods and our areas that have been set aside for peace, recreation and enjoyment of nature is bad for the people of Ohio. The value of keeping park land safe has already been acknowledged by the state in the exemption of State Parks from unitization. Local and county parks deserve the same consideration. Voters have supported the protection of park land

through their votes for park levies. I believe that allowing unitization of our parks is a taking from citizens and an unwarranted gift to Oil and Gas corporations and the few land owners who will gain from this use of public land for private profit. Encouraging drilling and fracking near local and county parks will negatively affect the property values of all who live nearby.

In addition, this language has no place in the state budget, having nothing to do with the finances of the state. This bad idea failed when it was introduced as a standalone bill, it must not be allowed to be inflicted upon the public by being inappropriately placed into the state budget. Please protect our vital public parks and remove the language allowing unitization of public parks from the budget bill.

Thank you Chairman Jordan, Vice Chair O'Brien and members of the committee for allowing me to speak with you today.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Hanratty
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