

	AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
	Witness Form

Name: Dr. Kristin Barker

Address: 65 W. Union Ave. McConnellsville, OH

Organization Representing: Morgan Local Schools

Testifying on Bill Number: 333

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

SB 333 Testimony – Dr. Kristin Barker

Today I share with you my support of Senate Bill 333.

I am Dr. Kristin Barker, the Superintendent of Morgan Local Schools. My life and career have taken me all over this great state, but I have never lived in an area as beautiful as southeastern Ohio. As such, I am so grateful that Governor DeWine and the state of Ohio arranged to purchase the more than 31,000 acres of AEP land in order to preserve and improve its vast acreage of lakes, campsites, trails, and nature reserves for public enjoyment. Preserving that beauty is an initiative I can absolutely support! However, this land acquisition comes at considerable cost to my already impoverished district. Because ODNR is a state agency, we can no longer collect the taxes that we were able to collect from AEP; this translates to a yearly income loss of \$269,514.

I am sharing this with you to bring to light an unintended consequence of this land purchase. While most of us in this area support the land acquisition whole-heartedly, I wanted you to be aware that school districts and municipalities in Appalachia face very difficult challenges that are not shared by those in urban settings. This is just one example of an issue that takes money from rural public schools and is not addressed in either the current or the proposed state education funding system. Unfortunately, we do not have the resources here to make up this loss; we need advocates such as Senator Schaffer to reveal how initiatives such as this can be extremely positive yet have negative consequences at the same time. Senate Bill 333 will help those of us who have experienced considerable financial loss due to the land acquisition. This bill will allow impoverished areas such as ours to not be adversely affected by events such as this which are beyond our control.

I urge you to take up Senate Bill 333 and protect southeast Ohio from yet another financial hardship. Thank you.