



Claudio Ingaramo  
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Testimony before the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing Cenovus Energy to testify in opposition to HB 205. I hope you will consider Cenovus’s testimony carefully, because – as the bill’s proponents pointed out – this legislation was carefully written to impose new contracting mandates *specifically and solely* on the two refineries Cenovus owns and operates in Ohio.

My name is Claudio Ingaramo and I serve as the Interim Regional Senior Vice President of Cenovus Energy’s U.S. operations. Before this role, I served as the plant manager for Cenovus’s Lima Refinery, and I have served in other leadership positions with major oil and gas companies around the world. In my current role, I am charged with implementing Cenovus’s mission and commitments to our communities, our employees, and – above all else – to safety.

Cenovus is now the largest refiner in Ohio, and currently employs about one thousand two hundred people at our two Ohio refineries and our head office in Dublin, Ohio. Cenovus owns the refinery in Lima, and in February, we purchased BP’s interest in the Toledo refinery that we now operate. Cenovus is the new operator in Toledo and some of the issues being discussed before this Committee occurred under prior operatorship.

Cenovus is deeply concerned about House Bill 205, legislation designed to force major changes in how Cenovus hires contract workers at our Ohio refineries. These changes have nothing to do with improving safety, nor would they guarantee more jobs for Ohioans. Rather, this bill limits the scope of who we can contract with, harms local contractors, and implements divisive and harmful rhetoric aimed at Hispanic workers.

HB 205 is about mandates that would guarantee the affiliated construction trades a monopoly on a specific segment of Ohio’s jobs market. Whether those workers are local or not, and whether they are qualified or not, will not matter under this legislation.

Thank you, Senators DeMora and Landis, for addressing the English language provisions in this legislation. You are correct: a person trained to perform a craft generally should not be excluded from employment based on their ability to speak a certain language. We must not forget: this is America, the nation with the strongest economy in the world. The foundation of that economy was built by people who came here from all over the world in search of opportunity.

I am a first-generation American from Argentina, and English is not my first language. Some of the members of this Committee are the sons and daughters or grandchildren of immigrants. Your ancestors were trained to perform a craft, and hopefully, they were not excluded from practicing their livelihood because of an arbitrary language test.

References to “Gulf Coast and Texas workers” in the sponsors’ testimony – and in particular, to workers from the “Deep South” – are nothing but anti-Hispanic and anti-Latin American rhetoric. I urge Committee members to reject this harmful, divisive rhetoric.

Manufacturers across Ohio accommodate workers of all languages by providing interpreters when needed. Cenovus is also committed to welcoming skilled workers from all backgrounds. We will provide interpreters to accommodate skilled workers whose first language may not be English, and we will work to ensure every worker is operating safely. Their safety is our highest priority.

Furthermore, throughout my career, I have worked closely with contractors and workers from all over the world. I am not aware of a safety incident at any refinery that was caused by a language barrier.

Cenovus values its strong and longstanding partnerships with unions. We employ approximately 550 USW-affiliated workers in Ohio, including process operators, skilled maintenance employees, and laboratory technicians. Our Lima and Toledo refineries each host as many as 300 building trades-affiliated maintenance contract workers onsite every day. The vast majority of embedded contract workers at our refineries live in Ohio and are represented by local trade and labor unions.

Cenovus does not base our contracting decisions on whether a firm is union or not. We base our contracting decisions on the scope of work and a firm’s ability to perform that work according to our safety and quality standards. There are no metrics showing that union-affiliated contractors perform better than non-union contractors. In fact, some of our historical metrics indicate the opposite.

Regarding out-of-state workers, what the sponsors and proponents of this bill have not told you is that union-affiliated contractors bring in large numbers of out-of-state workers for turnarounds and large-scale projects. Ohio does not have enough workers to fulfill the requirements needed for turnarounds and capital projects.

Under previous ownership, the Lima refinery hired union-affiliated contractors for the 2016 turnaround and the 2019 crude oil flexibility project. For the 2016 turnaround, 70 percent of the work was completed by union contractors, and 80 percent of those workers came from outside of the region. For the 2019 crude oil flexibility project, 95 percent of the work was completed by union contractors – and again, 80 percent of those workers came from outside of the region.

Let me repeat that because this is what HB 205’s supporters don’t want you to know. Those two projects were completed using mostly union labor and 80 percent of the workers were brought in from outside the region. Union-affiliated contractors bring in out-of-state workers, and for large projects, they bring them in in large numbers. They do so now, and they will continue to do so if HB 205 is enacted.

Members of the Committee, thank you to each of you for conducting a robust Committee process for this legislation. We are hopeful this process has helped you better understand the harmful impacts that HB 205 would have on Ohio’s refining industry. Cenovus appreciates the opportunity to be heard and to answer any questions you have.

Thank you for your time.