



**Ascent Resources, LLC  
Proponent Testimony  
Senate Bill 219**

**Natural Resources Committee  
Representative Monica Robb Blasdel, Chairman**

Chairman Robb-Blasdel, Vice-Chairman Fischer, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 219.

My name is Amanda Finn, and I am Vice-President of External Affairs at Ascent Resources, LLC, an exploration and production company focused on acquiring, developing, producing, and operating natural gas and oil assets in the Utica Shale in Ohio. Our company has grown to become one of the largest privately held exploration and production companies in the United States and is currently the largest producer in Ohio.

In 2012 Ohio passed Senate Bill 315. This bill was designed to help usher in the presence of shale operators and to update Ohio's statutes to account for the massive technological changes that came with unconventional oil and gas development. That bill helped make Ohio a national leader in energy development. Senate Bill 219 is designed to advance those laws to account for industry changes over the past fourteen years when that bill was first signed into law. Ascent Resources strongly supports the advancement of laws and regulations to accommodate the technological and operational changes that continue to occur as the industry grows and becomes more mature here in Ohio.

### **Road Use Maintenance Agreements**

Senate Bill 219 strives to put limited standards around Road Use Maintenance Agreements (RUMA's). Both the industry and local governments would point to RUMAs as being an important tool for oil and gas development. However, depending on the local government (township or county), RUMAs can vary significantly, creating uncertainty when operating across different jurisdictions. This bill aims to put certainty and understanding back into the RUMA process and get back to the root of what a RUMA was designed for, simply an agreement between two parties to enhance or maintain the roads traveled during active operations. The bill also ensures that operations and development can continue when frost laws are in place, provided the parties have made reasonable efforts to reach a RUMA agreement.

### **Clarifying Ohio Law**

Senate Bill 219 includes several clarifying updates to oil and gas laws. The bill makes it clear that the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management has the authority to regulate cross-state drilling. While the industry believes the Chief currently holds this authority, Senate Bill 219 seeks to clarify it through clear and concise statutory language.

### **State Lands Leasing Timelines**

For the past 14 years, the State of Ohio has been in various stages of attempting to lease state-owned acreage. For operators this process has been long, and while leasing has begun to make progress, there continues to be issues with the leasing process. This creates uncertainty for operators as it relates to their drill schedules and proceeding with the process as is. Senate Bill 219 sets more detailed timelines that will shore up the process and make it efficient for operators to feel comfortable nominating and bidding on

packages through the Commission. As with any business, we believe set timelines will make the Commission more efficient and allow operators to nominate acreage with the sound mind that the entire process will take a set amount of time, whereas currently there are no meetings being held and many nominations are past approval or denial timelines. We believe this language in Senate Bill 219 will provide the clarity that is lacking in this leasing process.

Madam Chairman and members of the committee I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony, and I respectfully ask for the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 219.