

To: Chair Blasdel, Vice Chair Fischer, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the House Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Shannon Flanders, and I live in Westerville, Ohio. I am a long-time citizen of Ohio. I love our state parks and natural spaces, and I am concerned about their future.

I oppose SB219 for many reasons, a few of which I will include in my testimony today.

Ohio is already friendly with the oil and gas industry, rolling out the welcome mat for companies to frack our public lands. This bill is full of more favors for oil and gas

. One of the most alarming is that fracking would be allowed inside our state parks and natural spaces. This upsets me so much, and I know many folks will feel the same when they find out that they can no longer enjoy spending time in our beautiful state parks and wildlife areas with their families, due to fracking harming these special places. Fracking inside state parks and wildlife spaces would make it impossible to hike, camp, fish, swim, observe birds and other animals, or simply enjoy the benefits that nature gives to us humans, allowing us much needed rejuvenation and recharging. After all, fracking requires bright lights, noisy machinery and hauling trucks, toxic chemicals, and massive amounts of our precious fresh water. Not only will people stop coming to our parks, but the wildlife will not be able to live there, forcing animals to flee in the hopes of finding new homes. Trees and other plants will also be hard pressed to survive.

This water, after being contaminated from the fracking process, cannot be used by us again, but must be injected underground. Already in Ohio, fracking waste water has leaked into some folks' drinking water, as well as some rivers and streams, and water required for agriculture to grow food that we need.

This bill relaxes and, in some cases, totally removes safety measures and needed regulations on fracking in our state. Any extraction industry that harms our land, air, and water, as fracking most definitely does, must be regulated. No one, including each committee member here today, would want their family members' health or wellbeing harmed. Nor would they want their homes or businesses harmed.

These and many other reasons I oppose SB219 all point to a couple of obvious facts: namely, that we do not need to frack our public lands at all in order to generate monies for our state coffers. Tourism from our state parks and wildlife spaces generates millions of dollars that economically benefit our state. Lots of small businesses rely on these tourists seeking recreation in wild spaces. Restaurants, lodging, and tourist destinations all rely on healthy parks for folks to enjoy.

Fracking is a short-sighted means of generating revenue. It is a short-sighted form of energy. Solar and wind power are already cheaper, much cleaner, reliable (due to battery storage), and provide good-paying jobs to Ohioans. In fact at least 8,000 Ohioans are working for solar companies presently. So, this bill simply makes no sense if we care about the healthy, prosperous future Ohio could have.

I thank you for considering my testimony on this critical topic. I urge you to vote no on SB 219.