

**March 16, 2026**

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

**From:** John Rutecki

**Address:** 567 Narragansett Drive, Tallmadge, OH 44278

**Subject:** Testimony in Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 219

Chair Blasdel, Vice Chair Fischer, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the Committee:

My name is John Rutecki, and I am a resident of Tallmadge, OH. I am writing to you today to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 219. As an Ohioan who values and frequently enjoys our state parks and wildlife areas, I am deeply concerned about the negative impacts this legislation will have on our public lands, our communities, and our environment.

While SB 219 is framed as a routine revision of laws governing oil and gas wells, it is in practice a massive deregulation of the industry at the expense of Ohio's natural resources and taxpayers.

I urge you to vote NO on this bill for the following key reasons:

- 1. It recklessly rushes the leasing and fracking process on public lands.** The timelines proposed in SB 219 are dangerously short for decisions that have permanent environmental impacts. By slashing the Oil and Gas Land Management Commission's review time from 180 to 90 days, forcing immediate bidding, and requiring state agencies to execute complex leases within 30 days, this bill prevents adequate oversight. It prioritizes industry speed over the careful stewardship of the public lands that Ohio taxpayers fund and use.
- 2. It introduces "surface use" and overrides previous executive vetoes.** I am highly alarmed that this bill attempts to allow oil and gas companies "surface use" of state land, effectively opening the door to fracking inside our state parks and wildlife areas. Furthermore, SB 219 attempts to force through multiple provisions that Governor DeWine already correctly vetoed from the state budget last year. These include extending lease options to five years and capping the costs the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) can charge companies. This cap could leave taxpayers footing the bill for spills or accidents.
- 3. It curtails ODNR's authority and endangers local infrastructure.** SB 219 actively undermines ODNR's ability to regulate the industry. It dangerously requires the prioritization of plugging orphan wells near frack waste injection wells rather than prioritizing them based on their actual pollution or danger risk. Additionally, eliminating the requirement for fracking permit applicants to enter into road use agreements with local governments, along with exempting them from heavy hauling permits, is a direct threat to the safety and budgets of our local, rural communities whose roads will be destroyed by overweight trucks.
- 4. It exacerbates severe environmental and climate impacts.** Ohio has already approved over 11,000 acres of our parks and wildlife areas for fracking, committing billions of gallons of our fresh water to this process. More fracking also means more methane emissions,

which accelerates climate change and degrades our local air quality. We do not need to erode our remaining safeguards to facilitate an industry that harms our environment.

Please protect Ohio's state parks, local infrastructure, and the regulatory authority of the ODNR by voting **NO on Senate Bill 219**.

Thank you for your time and for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

John Rutecki  
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