

March 13, 2026

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony opposing S.B. 219.

My name is Ruth Hardy. I reside in Anderson Township, Ohio.

I have been studying Ohio's gas and oil extraction processes for over 12 years.

I believe Ohio's public lands and forests provide critical services that must not be degraded by fracking installations, nor should fracking firms receive egregious and expedited permitting terms. These lands were legislated to be protected by the people of Ohio because they recognized their critical and far-reaching value .

Without a doubt, the oil and gas industry is using the current global energy crisis to justify even more latitude to rapidly increase and fast-track natural gas production, using state lands, while pushing for even less regulation and oversight. A large part of this current crisis is of their own making. They have lobbied for and won tax breaks, exceptions from federal environmental protections and disclosure loopholes, unfair discrepancies in siting rules, and local bans on renewable energy development, all while dodging responsibility for paying for clean-ups for leaks, spills and accidents, obtaining reduced safeguards & regulations, and stripping efficiency standards from state policy.

... And now they are demanding even more in SB 219.

Fracked oil and gas is tied to the whims of greedy oil producers worldwide, putting us in economic jeopardy from a treacherously disrupted global economy. But the more we produce and export, the more dependent we become on oil magnates' powers to manipulate both availability and prices.

Reliance on fossil fuels, whether produced domestically or abroad, puts our future in the hands of autocratic rulers, and the greedy oil producers and polluters who provide their hefty campaign contributions.

The real path to energy independence is through ending our reliance on fossil fuels, and instead, turning to clean and renewable energy we can develop at home in Ohio. Solar manufacture has already proved to be a big jobs provider in Ohio. We need more renewables manufacturing here in Ohio, not less.

But the manufactured war in the Mideast we are now fighting, and the manipulation of the oil and gas industry we are experiencing, are not even the worst part of this obsession to produce exponentially more natural gas in Ohio.

Fracking releases large amounts of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas that traps atmospheric heat at least 87 times more effectively than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. To have a reasonable chance of avoiding catastrophic climate disasters, we need to leave 80% of fossil fuel reserves in the ground.

If there's one thing we can all agree on, I believe it is that we all care for Ohio's children who are growing up into this horrific situation. What they need is clean food, water and air in order to survive, but fracking is destructive to each of these. Fracking uses chemicals like methanol, benzene, naphthalene, and trimethylbenzene which are migrating into our aquifers, surface water and wells, and are toxic to humans and wildlife, and the Radium 226 and 228 it emits are well known to cause cancer. Ohio is already experiencing extreme storms, flooding and droughts that have been exacerbated by the rise of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, causing farmers to struggle to produce successful crops. Starvation is already rampant globally in countries that have been ravaged by drought, leading to mass migration.

What we should be doing right now is helping renewable energy to thrive, rather than suppressing it. There are actually developing countries who are now skipping over fossil fuel addiction, and are going straight to solar panels and other renewables to meet their energy needs. Yet they will be unfairly hurt by climate disasters heading down the pike that we could have helped to avert by making similar changes in our own country and state.

And these developing countries are also planting trees and nurturing their ecologies. While here in Ohio, we are proposing to degrade the few remaining intact ecological systems that provide us with desperately needed ecological capital. The state lands which frackers want to degrade actually clean our water, cool down escalating temperatures, provide habitats for wildlife that undergird agriculture and recharge our aquifers, among many other critical ecological services (irreplaceable at any cost) these lands provide.

The rushed nature of passing Senate Bill 219 belies the motives of the oil & gas industry; they don't want citizens to get a closer look and weigh in. We are being denied a fair chance to protect ourselves and our kids' futures.

Please STOP S.B. 219, which favors one industry and its greed over the critical survival needs of all Ohioans and the environment we depend on.

Thank you.