

June 16, 2025

Kathleen Mathews  
4741 Echo Hills Avenue  
Springfield, OH 45502  
kbakermathews@icloud.com  
937-284-3713

The Honorable Tim Schaffer  
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 181.

As a resident of Clark County for the past 21 years and a member of the non-profit organization Mud Run Conservancy (a 501(c)(3)), I am writing to express my concerns regarding the potential consequences of Senate Bill 181 on local communities, homeowners, farmland preservation, and environmental oversight by local officials. If enacted as written, the bill will streamline the permitting process for industrial limestone production, allowing operators to add underground mining to a surface mining permit without obtaining the necessary input from homeowners and businesses surrounding the quarry, as well as local officials knowledgeable about the area and its residents.

The bill contains language open to interpretation. A good example is Section 1514.63 (C) (1) as follows:

"(C) (1) Notwithstanding any requirement or obligation to the contrary in this chapter, the chief shall issue, upon request and without application, an order granting an underground minerals mining permit or an amendment to a surface mining permit, as applicable, to either of the following:

(a) Any operator of an underground minerals mining operation in existence prior to and on the effective date of this section;

(b) A person who has begun to ***undertake development of an underground minerals mining operation prior to the effective date of this section.***"

What exactly does "undertake development" mean? Is there any criterion for following? Will a permit be granted or an amendment given by the chief if the operator has purchased land? Erected a sign? Is in the planning stage? Dug a hole in the ground?

Another concern is with the recommendation that allows mining operators to add land to a permit if it is located somewhere - anywhere - within the same township or city! That means land on opposite ends of a township, miles away, bordering entirely different businesses, homes, and waterways could be included with a simple amendment. No new permit, no technical review, and no dewatering model to predict the cone of depression and impact on any surrounding wells.

The implementation of Senate Bill 18, as presently composed, is unreasonable and irrational. The current provisions seem to benefit the operator at the expense of the community.

Please consider amending Senate Bill 181 to better serve the full spectrum of constituents across your district— operators and non-operators.

Thank you for being our voice in this critical decision.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Mathews