

Ohio Senate Energy Committee
Opposition Testimony
Senate Bill 219

Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Senate Energy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Senate Bill 219, which would create the Oil and Gas Resolution and Remediation Fund (OGRRF), along with several other changes to Ohio law regarding oil and gas operations.

In regards to SB 219, the expansion of “orphan well plugging” is certainly beneficial. These wells are a result of the lackadaisical attitudes that the industry has taken in regards to our communities as well as a lack of regulations which should mandate and enforce responsible management of this industry. Ohio, via the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, has documented hundreds of these dangerous wells and there are hundreds of other wells that have not been located.

The industry has literally, through the use of forced pooling or unitization, thrown away private property rights. If ODNR’s ability to turn down requests for expedited review is revoked, the industry will increase their encroachment into private property rights.

I live in an area where horizontal fracking is rampant. Roads to well pads cut across hillsides and through forested ecosystems. These roads are heavily trafficked with toxic brine trucks, sand trucks, chemical tankers and gravel trucks. Our roads were not meant to support this amount and type of traffic. Local communities have few options outside a road maintenance agreement. If SB 219 is passed, what can local communities do to protect citizens and maintain roads?

The seller of a well should maintain full responsibility over a well until a buyer takes over that responsibility as they verify ownership, purchase liability insurance and post a surety bond or proof of financial responsibility. Anything else would jeopardize residents living near a well pad. This is especially true given the number of accidents that occur at these sites. This is the very reason we have so many “orphan wells”. Drillers decide they want to walk away from a responsibility and just conveniently “skip town”.

It is for the above reasons that SB219 should be modified to protect Ohio citizens living in an area of oil and gas infrastructure.

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My home is located 0.9 mile from an oil and gas well in Harrison County.