

Dear Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, and Members of the Senate Energy Committee,

Please accept this opponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 219, which would create the Oil and Gas Resolution and Remediation Fund (OGRRF), along with several other dangerous changes to Ohio law regulating oil and gas operations.

This bill clearly uses the dangers of open orphan wells, with their extensive air pollution and safety risks to communities, to promote unfettered operations by oil and gas companies that have no stake in or sense of responsibility for the well-being of the communities in which they operate. The bill would also promote a dangerous buildout of fossil fuels due to its undermining of safeguards and regulation of the industry at a time when climate catastrophe caused largely by fossil fuel emissions costs more and more in human lives and homes, infrastructure, agricultural lands, and water and air quality.

Specifically, I oppose the bill's proposed:

- Elimination of ODNR's Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management's authority to refuse requests for expedited reviews of drilling permit applications. As stated in multiple places in Ohio law, ODNR has sole authority to regulate fracking operations in Ohio. Removing the chief's authority to make basic decisions, such as whether to expedite an application shifts decision making power back onto the players who profit off of the enterprise and therefore have no business making decisions about oversight and regulation.. If an oil and gas company can get expedited review on demand, what else can they get? It sounds to me like the fox getting to decide how the chicken coop should be built.
- Relieving a well owner from obligations and liabilities upon transfer of the well if the owner files required information with the DOGRM, instead of maintaining those obligations and liabilities until the transferee takes control of the well. This is an absurd provision, which would create more orphan wells! If the owner of a no longer producing well can simply transfer it to DOGRM, citizen taxpayers will likely be the ones who pay for it – including if a well is a dangerous liability. What is to prevent an unscrupulous company from transferring such a well to a shell company, which either never claims it or goes out of business? Nothing – Another gift by those entrusted with protecting the best interests of Ohioans to the industry they are charged with overseeing. This provision needs to be stricken from SB 219.
- Eliminating the requirement that a horizontal well permit applicant enter into road maintenance agreements with local governments, making these voluntary agreements that would end after three years – and exempting the requirement for a horizontal well permit holder to obtain a special regional heavy hauling permit if the load size or weight exceeds legal limits. This is yet another gift to the polluting, profit-driven, extractive regulated industry by the government supposedly elected by and to serve the interests of the people of Ohio. This state is beginning to resemble fascism, in which industry runs government instead of being regulated by government to protect the health, safety, and economic well-being of the people of the state.

As a resident of SE Ohio where fracking, injection wells, and associated heavy trucks damage our roads, pollute our water and air daily, and are involved in repeated spills

and road accidents, I am appalled that our government is using a purportedly environmentally focused bill to sneak through such gifts to self-interested polluters at the expense of the people who live in SE and eastern Ohio. Although with an oil company owner in charge of your committee, the deal may be a foregone conclusion, perhaps reason and your ethical and legal responsibilities as public servants entrusted with the well-being of the residents, lands, waters, and air of Ohio will lead to a reconsideration of this dangerous legislation. I write not with much hope of changing minds that are ruled by personal profit and lobbyist dollars but out of a sense of obligation to raise my voice nevertheless for Ohioans' health and safety.

I urge you to reject SB 219 until its corrupt gifts to the polluting o&g industry are eliminated.

Heather Cantino, Athens