

Feb. 1, 2026

Mr. Chavez and members of the Senate Energy Committee:

I submit the following opponent testimony on SB 294, a foolish and dangerous bill, full of nonsense and downright lies.

No, fracking is not green energy, no matter how you may try to spin it. Methane, which is leaked at all stages of fracking extraction, production, transportation, and storage processes, is 80-100 times more powerful a greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub> at the 20-year time frame, which is obviously the relevant time frame now, given our rapidly heating and deteriorating climate. In addition to extreme methane emissions, fossil gas emits CO<sub>2</sub> when burned and of course through the extraction, production, and transportation processes. The latest polar vortex perturbations and consequent record-breaking long-persisting frigid temperatures, intense snow and ice storms, needless deaths, and severe hardship throughout the eastern US are clearly urgent warnings about the collapse of global climate stability, which has been documented by all credible sources as being exacerbated by increasing fossil fuel emissions.

**Fracking is a major source of methane emissions**, as documented by Cornell scientist Robert Howarth and others' research. As explained in [news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/08/study-fracking-prompts-global-spike-atmospheric-methane](https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/08/study-fracking-prompts-global-spike-atmospheric-methane): "As methane concentrations increase in the Earth's atmosphere, chemical fingerprints point to a probable source: shale oil and gas, according to [new Cornell research published Aug. 14 in Biogeosciences](#), a journal of the European Geosciences Union... This carbon-13 signature means that since the use of high-volume hydraulic fracturing – commonly called fracking – shale gas has increased in its share of global natural gas production and has released more methane into the atmosphere, according to the paper's author, [Robert Howarth](#), Professor of Ecology and Environmental Biology at Cornell. About two-thirds of all new gas production over the last decade has been shale gas produced in the United States and Canada, he said."

"While atmospheric methane concentrations have been rising since 2008, the carbon composition of the methane has also changed. Methane from biological sources such as cows and wetlands have a low carbon-13 content – compared to methane from most fossil fuels. Previous studies erroneously concluded that biological sources are the cause of the rising methane, Howarth said." "Carbon dioxide and methane are critical greenhouse gases, but they behave quite differently in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide emitted today will influence the climate for centuries to come, as the climate responds slowly to decreasing amounts of the gas. Unlike its slow response to carbon dioxide, the atmosphere responds quickly to changes in methane emissions."

***“Reducing methane now can provide an instant way to slow global warming and meet the United Nations’ target of keeping the planet well below a 2-degree Celsius average rise,”*** Howarth said, referring to the 2015 Paris Agreement that boosts the global response to climate change threats. “Atmospheric methane levels had previously risen during the last two decades of the 20th century but leveled in the first decade of 21st century. Then, atmospheric methane levels increased dramatically from 2008-14, from about 570 teragrams (570 billion tons) annually to about 595 teragrams, due to global human-caused methane emissions in the last 11 years. ‘This recent increase in methane is massive,’ Howarth said. ‘It’s globally significant. It’s contributed to some of the increase in global warming we’ve seen and shale gas is a major player. ***If we can stop pouring methane into the atmosphere, it will dissipate,”*** he said. ***“It goes away pretty quickly, compared to carbon dioxide. It’s the low-hanging fruit to slow global warming.”***”

As for the connection between fracking, climate catastrophe, and weather, a 2026 NY Times article ([nytimes.com/2026/01/29/climate/climate-change-extreme-weather.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/29/climate/climate-change-extreme-weather.html)) explains, “On a typical winter day, the Arctic air that has gripped much of the United States this week should be a few thousand miles to the north, sitting atop the North Pole. But as man-made climate change continues to disrupt global weather patterns, that mass of cold air, known as [the polar vortex](#), is straying beyond its usual confines. The escaped polar vortex is just one instance of extreme weather playing out right now around the world...Elsewhere, extreme heat is raging. Australia is reeling from a record heat wave that has [pushed temperatures past 120 degrees Fahrenheit](#), or about 49 Celsius, in some areas, leading to fires and power outages. In central Africa, brutal heat has shattered records in recent days, with countries north of the Equator hitting temperatures above 101 degrees Fahrenheit. **Colder colds. Hotter hots. These are the intense bouts of unusual weather that scientists for decades warned would become more common with global warming. “This is the thing we’ve talked about with climate change,”** said **Judson Jones, a Times meteorologist and reporter. “The extremes are going to be more extreme.”** Around the world, climate change is making heat waves more intense, more persistent and extending heat over larger areas, said Jennifer Francis, a senior scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center. “On top of that, increased moisture in the atmosphere makes the heat more dangerous because sweating as a cooling mechanism doesn’t work as well,” she added. Global warming is also intensifying droughts. With a warm atmosphere holding more moisture, water is evaporating faster, drying out soils. “The combination of heat and drought is a recipe for wildland fires, which are becoming more numerous and destructive,” Francis said. And when it rains, it pours. All that additional moisture in the atmosphere is leading to an uptick in heavy precipitation events. “When a storm does form, it has more moisture to dump as rain or snow,” she said. Meanwhile, another winter storm — this [one coming in from the Atlantic Ocean](#) —

is set to hit the eastern U.S. this weekend. There's even a possibility of snow in Tampa, Fla., something that hasn't happened in four decades.”

“Overall, the Arctic is [warming much faster](#) than the rest of the planet, and the polar vortex has already been disrupted a number of times this year. A disrupted polar vortex may sound abstract, but the consequences are very real. The effects of the last winter storm are still being felt around the country. [More than 60 people](#) around the country died, including [several in New York City](#) who died from exposure to the cold. Around the country, [tens of thousands of people were still without power](#) days after the storm had passed. [More than a foot of snow](#) fell in 19 states, and cities including Washington were still struggling to dig out, leading much of the federal government to work remotely. And with temperatures staying low, there has been no chance for the snow and ice to thaw, putting much of the country into a sort of frozen paralysis. In Central Arkansas, many [school districts remained closed](#) for much of the week with roads impassable. Highways in Mississippi were snarled for days, leading to [the National Guard being brought in](#) to help clear the ice.”

Not only has the eastern U.S. been gripped by intense cold, snow, and ice for record periods already in 2026, but there is likely more ahead. The [Severe Weather meteorological site](#) predicts February to continue this disastrous trend: “New forecasts confirm a Polar Vortex split and collapse in mid-February, following a Stratospheric Warming event. The latest predictions show a breakdown of the polar circulation, creating a prolonged cold weather pattern across North America and Europe, with early signs that it can last into early Spring. While the main collapse is scheduled for mid-month, the United States and Canada are already feeling the early effects of a pre-split disruption. A deformed, elongated Polar Vortex core is currently pushing cold anomalies into the central and eastern U.S., with **temperatures in some regions forecast to drop 30°F below normal**. Current data indicates that this Stratospheric Warming event will start unfolding over the next 8 to 10 days. In this article, we will look at the **prolonged disruption** of the stratospheric Polar Vortex. Also, we will analyze the resulting **weather impacts** over North America and Europe for the remainder of winter and into early spring.” ([severe-weather.eu/global-weather/polar-vortex-collapse-february-2026-stratospheric-warming-forecast-winter-united-states-canada-europe-fa/](https://severe-weather.eu/global-weather/polar-vortex-collapse-february-2026-stratospheric-warming-forecast-winter-united-states-canada-europe-fa/))

**In addition to drastic weather events, we are facing approaching climate tipping points** ([nytimes.com/interactive/2024/08/11/climate/earth-warming-climate-tipping-points.html](https://nytimes.com/interactive/2024/08/11/climate/earth-warming-climate-tipping-points.html)): “Already, though, we know enough to be sure about one thing, said Niklas Boers, a climate scientist at the Technical University of Munich and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research...’With every gram of additional CO2 in the atmosphere,

we are increasing the likelihood of tipping events,” he said. “The longer we wait” to slash emissions, he said, “the farther we go into dangerous territory.”

***Solar and wind along with battery storage are reliable, do not emit greenhouse gas emissions, and are cost-effective, the lies in this bill notwithstanding.***

For those of you who may be End of Times Christians who may not care about destroying our planet, your willingness to sacrifice the lives of millions and the livability of our planet based on your religion or even for religious aims is a form of ecocide and genocide, indicating that you have no business being in a role of responsibility for the public welfare, in which you pretend to represent the interests of Ohioans. Such wanton disregard for the impacts of your actions is clearly contrary to your oath of office. Shame on anyone who votes for this bill. And shame on the Chair for not recusing himself from participation in this process, given his clear conflicts of interest as an owner of oil and gas industrial facilities, as documented in the recent ethics complaint by a statewide coalition led by Washington County for Safe Drinking Water ([sites.google.com/view/washington-county-safe-water/ethics-complaint/files](https://sites.google.com/view/washington-county-safe-water/ethics-complaint/files)) against the Energy Committee Chair’s participation in this legislative process and his lack of adherence to the oath of office in potential violation of ORC § 102.03. As stated in the coalition’s attending press release, “...this is not a local grievance but a matter of Statewide Accountability. For democracy to function, the public must have absolute confidence that their representatives are free from undisclosed conflicts of interest, especially in areas as vital as energy policy and environmental regulation.”

I urge you to vote against this dangerous, misled bill.

I urge you to decline support for ecocide as your oath of office requires.

Heather Cantino, Athens