

June 4th, 2025

Dear Ohio Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Jason Rech and I am the Chair of the Department of Geology and Environmental Earth Science at Miami University. I am writing to request that you restore the following provision to the state budget:

“Increases the percentage of oil and gas severance taxes credited to the Geological Mapping Fund (Fund 5110), from 10% to 14%, and decreases the percentage to the Oil and Gas Well Fund (Fund 5180), from 90% to 86%.”

The Division of Geological Survey at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources plays a critical role in the development of the Ohio economy by providing the geological framework through geologic mapping and recording. These services intersect almost all areas of the Ohio economic sector, and recent cost-benefit analyses have shown that money spent on geologic mapping has an economic return of up to 10 times. Specific examples from Ohio include:

Oil and Gas – The oil and gas industry of Ohio relies on the 3-dimensional framework supplied by geologic mapping and well log descriptions supplied, archived, and made accessible by the Division of Geological Survey. The Ohio Geological Survey is also working on various projects aimed at enhanced oil and gas recovery, quantifying organic carbon in shale lithologies, and defining stratigraphic boundaries that are often critical for oil and gas recovery.

Groundwater Resources – Groundwater resources are key for industry and Ohio is home to numerous corporations that rely on abundant and reliable groundwater resources. The Division of the Geological Survey continues to map buried aquifer systems and identify groundwater aquifers that allow for economic development and recruitment of industry to Ohio.

Seismic Analysis - Across the US the energy sector and other industries have been shut down due to seismic hazards associated with fracking and wastewater injection wells. Production and extraction of oil and gas, along with injection of wastewater, can be done safely when seismic activity is recorded and monitored. The Division of Geological Survey plays an active role in recording and monitoring seismic activity in Ohio and allowing the safe extraction or disposal of materials.

The Division of Geological Survey also provides a wide array of data and collaborates with scientists across the state to develop the STEM workforce of Ohio. In summary, I urge the Senate Finance Committee to reinstate the proposed change in the oil and gas severance taxes credited to the Geological Mapping Fund.

Sincerely,



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