

Dear Senator Eklund,

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 33, for reasons described below. I want to first say that the restriction of public testimony today is unprecedented and wrong. We the people of Ohio have elected officials to represent US- not corporate interests. We have a right to testify at public hearings, and to have our voices heard.

The intent of Senate Bill 33 is to intimidate concerned citizens and non-profit organizations, and to discourage them from expressing their opposition to pipelines and other fossil fuel infrastructure in Ohio. Residents in affected areas of Ohio have already seen environmental destruction in their communities, especially from fracking. Other states and even countries have banned fracking- it is a dangerous and highly pollutive process of extracting fossil fuels. We've had earthquakes in OH, water contamination, leaks at pipelines, explosions and high amounts of methane released which is 86x more potent than CO2 as a greenhouse gas. Huge amounts of water are used during fracking, which cannot re-enter the water table.

Many people don't yet know about the state and industry proposed plans to build out a massive petrochemical hub in eastern Ohio, which would supply ethane to the plastic industry and support foreign exports of gas. Chinese investors have pledged billions of dollars to this project. This would involve a major expansion of fracking in that region, along with the construction of hundreds of miles of pipelines, several plastic production facilities and the construction of a huge natural gas storage facility in salt caverns under the Ohio River. Our Ohio River Valley would become a much larger version of the petrochemical and plastic corridor in Gulf Coast- a Cancer Ally in the Mid-West.

The IPCC report was grim- we have less than 12 years to stop catastrophic climate change. We have a overwhelming problem with plastic pollution in our landfills and oceans. The Ohio River is the source of drinking waters for millions of people. These are "critical" issues that affect all of us. We cannot afford to put corporate profits above our health, our lives. I am very concerned and have the right to peacefully protest against harmful industrial activity. Please oppose Senate Bill 33, and listen to your constituents. We want clean, renewable energy- and "critical infrastructure" for solar and wind. We want a brighter future for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you,  
Mary Ellen Berger  
Columbus, Ohio