

RE: Written Testimony opposing S.B. 33

Why does Ohio need a new law to protect the property of the gas and oil industry from Ohio citizens? Current laws protect property from trespass, vandalism, arson and other mischief. Even persons who commit civil disobedience in the name of a "higher purpose" are accountable for violating laws that protect private property.

Are our fellow citizens violating the laws in mass actions and attacking fracking sites, destroying pipelines or sabotaging construction equipment? I am not reading about such actions in our newspaper or online, seeing stories on TV or hearing such headlines on the radio.

So why is our Ohio Senate's Judiciary Committee spending its precious time to solve a problem that does not exist, to "protect" an industry it refuses to tax fairly, even at the skimpy rate that the State of Texas does? Why is our Senate once again picking "winners" and "losers" in the energy field. Don't they believe in the capitalist system, free markets and small government? I seems they don't.

So why is S.B. 33, crafted by out of state interests, so important? Our legislature has already made it abundantly clear that oil profits are more important than our people and their property rights. Laws and regulations are drafted to protect this industry rather than protect our land and our people. Oil spills pollute our streams and aquifers with near impunity. Poisonous gases continuously pollute the air around fracking sites at the peril of our people and our planet. The materials added to fracking water do not have to be disclosed; they are "trade secrets." However, fracking wastes are now permitted to be dumped on our roads in the name of de-icing or snow removal. So much for respecting God's Creation.

So why are our State Senators working on this bill to further protect the oil and gas industry from our citizens? It appears that our State Senators desire to protect this private property from the free speech rights of our citizens. This bill seems designed to create a chilling effect to intimidate our citizens from speaking out and organizing in protest. Just whom do our State Senators represent, anyway?

Sincerely,
Donald P. Finn