



FaCT-Faith Communities Together for a Sustainable Future

Dear Chairman Eklund,

FaCT-Faith Communities Together has been working since 2011 on an interfaith basis to protect the Creation and the health and safety of Ohio families threatened by extreme extraction practices like those practiced in the shale development industry. We also work to promote the rapid conversion of our energy system away from fossil fuels and onto green, renewable energy.

Our members are already aware, and, in our experience, we have noticed that Ohioans are becoming increasingly aware that ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) works within the Ohio General Assembly to promote legislation that threatens the rights and health of Ohio families. The latest example is SB 33, which would impose severe penalties on peaceful protesters who might be demonstrating against the latest environmental outrage in our state, most notably those being undertaken by the fossil fuel industry.

In times like these, speaking out against and demonstrating against environmental outrages that threaten people and the natural environment is the duty of everyone with a conscience. As people of faith, we feel duty-bound to undertake this kind of speech which is protected by the Bill of Rights. SB 33 threatens the exercise of these rights.

SB 33 is overkill. Supporters claim that it would protect vital infrastructure against vandalism. But Ohio already has plenty of laws that punish vandals and trespassers. SB 33 is merely designed to intimidate – to discourage citizens concerned about environmental damage from demonstrating and to create a chill amongst environmental organizations that could face heavy fines if the most tenuous of connections can be established between its positions and the actions of an individual who might act irresponsibly.

ALEC continues to write “model” legislation like SB 33 that legislators latch on to and promote. It is time for our state legislators to stop working for ALEC and to start working for us, the people of Ohio. They can start by voting down SB 33.

Please look to your conscience. Can you really morally defend legislation which is designed to curtail First Amendment rights in order to promote the interests of the fossil fuel industry, an industry that regards environmental damage as an externality necessary for their profits? Please, think first of the health and safety of Ohio families. Do not enact SB 33 into law.

-Ron Prosek, Vice-President

(resident of Mentor, OH)

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