

Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Testimony Regarding SB 33
April 24, 2019

Dear Chairman Eklund,

Thank you for accepting this written testimony in opposition to SB 33.

I was born and grew up in Ohio and returned in 2005. As a Christian I am very committed to protecting God's creation. As a citizen of the United States I am committed to upholding the principles of democracy, justice and equality that are woven throughout the U.S. Constitution. As an educator in a beautiful rural area of our Appalachian region (University of Rio Grande, Gallia County), I am struck by the deteriorating environmental health of our state. For all these reasons I think it is essential that the interests of citizens and the well-being of our environment be given more weight than the wishes of those few who benefit when preference is given to the oil and gas industry.

Of course I agree with protecting critical infrastructure. However, I believe the protective focus at this time should be on legislation to insure safety to workers and the community, not on adding penalties to prevent concerned residents and groups from drawing the public's attention to actual and potential harm that the presence of infrastructure like gas pipelines may entail. For example, the natural gas pipeline that exploded in rural Noble County in January of this year is owned by Enbridge Inc. One example of that company's record (as documented by the National Safety Transportation Board) is a huge gas leak event in Illinois resulting in 6,430 barrels of oil being released, with the damage and clean up cost of \$46.6 million. We know that all types of damage are not even accounted for in such events. Legislation should enable us to have closer scrutiny of the existing regulations and records of violations as well as penalties for those violations and better monitoring of air and water quality so that real costs can be assessed. Instead of protecting (and possibly worsening) the status quo, attention to infrastructure should result in restoring our waterways and decreasing air pollution and accumulation of solid waste, making Ohio a healthier and more economically attractive place to live!

Knowing the concerns of many people throughout the state, I sincerely ask you not to enact SB 33 into law.

Anne Sparks