

To the Chairman Representative Jason Stephens, Vice Chairman Brian Stewart and Ranking Member Casey Weinstein, my name is Randy Cunningham. I live in Cleveland, Ohio and I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to House Bill 282.

The citizens and residents of the State of Ohio have put up with a lot in the name of energy independence over the past several decades of fracking and pipeline development in Ohio. They have seen drinking wells polluted by oil and gas drilling. They have said goodbye to the peace and quiet of the countryside, as battalions of construction equipment have descended on their communities to build fracking wells and all that goes with them. They have seen their roads torn up by this construction and truck traffic. They have seen their property rights turned into a sick joke whenever those rights get in the way of oil and gas development. The pipelines that accompany such development have blasted new pathways through, over and under landscapes that are near and dear to them. Pipelines that have fouled water ways, and one in Tuscarawas County destroyed a historic landmark home. This industry has also provided its share of excitement for residents with numerous explosions, fires, and other accidents. Finally, there is an accumulating, peer reviewed body of studies and reports that have linked fracking sites with diseases and illness linked to the pollutants that are the byproducts of this type of enterprise.

Through it all the attitude of the State of Ohio has been “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” Anyone who complains about all the above abuses had might as well testify to the trees on the State House grounds, for all the good it will do them.

House Bill 282 provides the opportunity to see if there is any limit to what the State of Ohio will tolerate from the fracking industry. This bill says it is OK to not only despoil the countryside, ruin aquifers and waterways, and poison those unfortunate enough to live next to fracking installations. It says that it is OK to spread radioactive brine from fracking operations on roads for dust and oil abatement. This is such an outrageous proposal, that even the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), an agency infamous for being solicitous to every whim and wish of industry, is screaming bloody murder over this bill. Even the ODNR has done studies that show this is not a good idea. But this bill and its predecessors have become perennial proposals, year after year, before the General Assembly of Ohio. It is what I call a Dracula bill. It never dies.

To add insult to injury, this is a bill that only one industry will benefit from – the manufacturers of AquaSalina. Manufacturers of a product that they swear is environmentally benign. It has been my experience that whenever a company makes that claim, especially a company tied to the fracking industry, then you know you are in trouble. So, this is a bill that will nuke our roadways, and that is written not to benefit the common good, but to benefit one particular manufacturer. So, the question is before this committee. Is there any red line the State of Ohio will not cross in serving the fracking complex of industries? Thank you.