

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and Members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, I am a resident of Hamilton County, Senate District 9, and I'm writing to voice my opposition to SB171, which establishes the sale of oil & gas waste, aka brine, as a commodity. The EPA's limit for radioactivity in drinking water is 5 picocuries/liter, and Ohio's own administrative code has a combined Radium 226 and 228 limits of 120 picocuries/liter for discharge to the environment. However, this bill specifically allows for oil & gas brine to have combined Radium 226 & 228 levels of 22,500 picocuries/liter, which is more than 187x Ohio administrative code limit, and 4500x the EPA's limit for drinking water. Furthermore, brine samples from Ohio gas wells were measured by our state's Department of Natural Resources in 2017, and separately by the Center for Environmental Research and Education at Duquesne University scientist, to have radioactivity more than 300x EPA's limit for drinking water.

I grew up in Appalachia, eastern KY, where we experienced boiled water advisories multiple times a year. And I know many regions of Appalachia experience the same. Our water infrastructure is already stressed with age and pollution. How can we consider polluting it more? Who will front the extremely high cost to clean our water when it becomes radioactive? I'm also a gardener and I know the necessity of a healthy soil microbiome for healthy crops. My neighbor being able to purchase this brine to deice their driveway will result in run-off into our yards, destroying our soil with radioactivity. And spreading this on our roads puts all our farms at risk of radioactive run-off. How can we risk our food in this way?

This brine puts at risk of dangerous radiation the workers who have to handle it, the soil and water for the farms that grow and raise our food, the water we drink, and even the air we breathe. The radiation danger is real and documented as the CDC has linked cancer cases in Louisiana to radioactive oil & gas waste. If our neighbors are allowed to purchase this brine from a hardware store and spread it on driveways and sidewalks, if our towns and counties spread this on our roads, then our friends, families, and pets will be exposed to dangerous radiation. We cannot do this. Please stop this bill.

John C Calhoun
Citizen of Ohio