



**Ohio Senate  
Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
S.B. 171  
Opponent Testimony**

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Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer opponent testimony on SB 171. My name is Amalie Lipstreu, and I am the Policy Director at the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association.

OEFFA is an organization of approximately more than 4,000 members and 10,000 supporters that value and support sustainable agriculture and local/regional food systems. We also operate one of the oldest and largest USDA accredited organic certification agencies in the United States.

Approximately one three fourths of our farmers are certified organic, and millions of consumers are aware of and purchase organic products. Let me share with you two things. First- Organic food production has seen double digit growth in the past decade. The growth and profitability in organic is a bright spot in American Agriculture. The state of Ohio is sixth in the nation in the number of organic farmers and second in the nation in the amount of conventional farmland being transitioned to organic management systems. Second- Organic farmers minimize the use of off-farm inputs. That means that they build on farm fertility and utilize cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster the cycling of resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity. It is a holistic approach to farming that moves well beyond the absence of synthetic chemical inputs and incorporates prerequisites of water quality, soil quality, wildlife habitat and much more.

The USDA National Organic Program and USDA accredited certifiers- such as OEFFA, are required to make sure these producers keep their land free of prohibited inputs. OEFFA worked with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, state agencies, legal organizations and pipeline companies to prevent and mitigate the damage from unconventional nature gas extraction and potential decertification of organic farms. Protecting the viability of this thriving industry is under threat. House bill 171 has the potential to thwart the growth of this growing industry and its positive economic and environmental impacts to Ohio's rural communities by introducing non-point sources of contamination that can damage organic crops.

The "brine" from UNGA includes unknown combinations of proprietary chemicals and naturally occurring radioactive materials. Given the makeup of these fluids, we question the ability to ensure they are free from chemicals that cannot be tested for by the public- including organic certification agencies.

Spreading this fluid, that has any possibility of including radioactive materials and unknown chemical products, where runoff can enter farm fields and food production areas is not only a concern for the potential decertification of organic farms. It is also a food safety and public health concern for our rural communities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we respectfully ask for withdrawal of this bill.

