

Testimony for the Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Hearing June 15,2021

Testimony in opposition to Substitute House Bill 201
“Prevent local governments from limiting use of natural gas”

Chair McColley, Vice-Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the committee,

There is no pressing emergency or public good that would justify the Ohio legislature removing the ability of local jurisdictions to make decisions on the safety and efficacy of natural gas pipelines and deep well hydraulic fracturing.

To the contrary, fracking is a dirty process from beginning to end, taking millions of gallons of local water, adding up to 600 different chemicals into it, many of them toxic, and injecting it with force and deafening noise into bedrock. This process takes a lot of energy.

This water is then permanently contaminated. Half of it is left in the ground, and some of it is spilled above ground. The remaining half goes to someone else’s territory in Ohio, where it is injected into the ground or put into a water treatment plant which is then expected to remove those chemicals. In fact, those chemicals interfere with the bacterial digestion of the sanitary waste.

At both the fracking and injections sites, localities risk having their aquifers contaminated with these chemicals, as we have seen the photos of people lighting the gas coming out of their taps.

Thousands of trucks carrying sand descend on local communities, causing traffic jams, air pollution and breaking up roads which then have to be paid by the local jurisdictions.

All this pollution is what we call “externalizing the costs.” These are costs that are paid by the local people and the environment, instead of being paid by the corporations that are leaving their toxins and road damage behind without being made to take responsibility for them and clean them up.

When the gas is processed and burned, the air is also contaminated. Unfortunately, humans are not programmed to deal with things that are out of our sight. So the fact that the earth’s climate is threatened with catastrophic change is not apparent in present time, though the increases in heat, rain, fires and floods should be noticeable by those bothering to look.

This committee, and the Ohio legislature, should not be the bodies making decisions like this for local communities.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Marida
Columbus, OH