

Dear Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The amendment inserted into the budget bill that fast-tracks oil and gas development on public lands seeks to significantly altar the leasing process established by the Oil and Gas Leasing Commission in 2011 for the leasing of public lands and threatens the legacy of the state parks.

Although one could argue that there were flaws in process established ten years ago, it did establish mechanism for transparency, objectivity, public oversight, and public involvement. These important checks and balances are eliminated in the current bill.

Furthermore, up until now the state leasing revenues have been reinvested in the acquisition of new public lands and capital improvements for existing state parks and forests. The current bill would eliminate these public benefits and reinvest the proceeds in the leasing program, and furthermore, promote drilling in state lands.

**I urge you not to remove these provisions and to maintain the current law.**

Ohio's public lands are a natural treasure for all Ohioans, vital to public health, outdoor recreation, and a strong healthy environment. Oil and gas development is in direct conflict with public enjoyment and health, demanding surface infrastructure that destroys visual integrity, pollutes the air, and prevents the enjoyment of the natural sounds found in nature, effects which extend beyond the boundaries of the parks.

The State of Ohio holds our state lands in trust for the people of Ohio, not for the narrow interests of the oil and gas industry. Please maintain that trust!

Sincerely,

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