

April 2, 2019

Senate Committee,

On behalf of the Ohio Tri County Coalition, we wanted to issue a statement expressing our concerns over the re-introduction of Senator Hoagland's self-serving bill to offer protection to the oil industry rather than the neighbors who are trying to protect their families.

This hits especially close to home for us as we have spent the last year trying to educate our neighbors on the unfriendly leases that they were being offered. We lived with out-of-state trucks throwing garbage in the yards of our neighbors who had signs posted against them. Neighbors could not let their children play outdoors because the RIP security details were standing across from their properties, protecting unwanted industrialization that the vast majority of our area rejected.

We set a precedence in our area by hosting a Health and Safety Fair in which we invited the Ohio Health Registry to administer baseline testing for those in close proximity to health risks, as well as supplying water testing information for homeowners to protect themselves from contamination.

Our local groups worked together to bring oil and gas attorneys to community meetings to help residents not go into a conversation with a landman without basic knowledge. We were verbally assaulted when we met at the river, yelled at when we attended city council meetings, and laughed at when we spoke with the county. Yet this group of multi-partisan neighbors refused to simply let a few people make the decisions for the whole community. We wrote letters, sent photos, created mailers, and submitted articles- all to help bring attention to the violation of property rights the majority in our area had been facing.

We were thankful that both Rep. Romanchuk and Sen. Obhof took time to hear our concerns, even sharing some of their own. We worked hard to protect the future generations of our area from having to deal with decisions made today. We are extraordinarily fortunate that for now our community is being evacuated for its disappointing output. But we know that thousands more are in our shoes in our beautiful state at this very moment, so we cannot simply be thankful for what we have. We must acknowledge that every child is important and worth fighting for when it comes to clean air and water.

We are not a threat, as this bill would have us be. We are mothers and fathers, priests and pastors, young and old, conservative and liberal. We understand that our only chance to keep this industry out of our beautiful home is to work together. We already face the dangers of corporate, industrialized farming and all that it does to harm the residents in rural areas, and we do not feel our children should be the statistics for an out-of-state profit margin being sponsored with foreign money. We feel that this bill will bind the hands of those who are screaming to be heard. It is so important that The People are the ones being represented in all legislation and not lobbyists and profiteers. Our Founding Fathers were very clear on the matter. It is hard to imagine what our rural landscape could become if those who want to protect it are silenced. There has to be point where ethics and human decency are recognized as virtues again rather than annoyances that hinder. There will be very little to remind society of this if only those in the position to gain wealth are being heard.

Continuing on for all of our neighbors,

Elaine Tanner