

THE CONTENTS OF OHIO HB 133 AND SB 108

Here's the scoop on Ohio HB 133 and SB 108:

Overview

The bills would open all state lands, including all state parks; nature preserves; and state university grounds, to oil and gas drilling (including fracking). They give authority to grant drilling leases on state land to a new Oil and Gas Leasing Board. The board is to be politically appointed and, per the language of the Bill, represented by oil and gas industry interests.

The Oil and Gas Leasing Board will be funded by money from the leases it grants.

- The bills strip state universities of their current authority to approve or disapprove drilling leases on university lands.
The bills fail to include any provisions for the protection of human health or the environment.
- The bills proclaim that it is the policy of the State to encourage drilling in state lands.
- The bills exclude the public from any stage of the leasing process. Ohio citizens will have no say as to whether their parks will or will not be leased for oil and gas drilling; there will be no formal opportunity for public comments.

Additional Information

The majority of Ohioans oppose drilling on our state lands. A poll conducted by the *Columbus Dispatch* newspaper showed that more than 70 percent of the readers participating in the survey oppose the idea of drilling for oil and gas at Ohio's state parks. Ohioans believe these lands have been set-aside as sanctuaries where families can go to enjoy our state's natural treasures.

Our State Lands should be protected from pollution and other risks caused by drilling. The natural gas industry currently enjoys unacceptable federal exemptions from key parts of the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Toxic Release Inventory under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, and others. Hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling (also known as fracking) pollutes groundwater with massive amounts of toxic drilling chemicals and can further poison the water table—and the food chain—by exposing and releasing highly radioactive elements such as radon. In recent years, drilling has caused explosions, fires, water contamination, and spills on private lands in Ohio. With only 22 inspectors in the entire state, Ohio lacks the resources to enforce the minimal safety regulations that exist on private, let alone state lands.

Drilling would disrupt the pristine ecosystems on our state lands. The presence of drill rigs, compressor stations, pipelines and roads would threaten the long-term sustainability of our fish, wildlife, and water resources. The access roads, larger clearings, and retaining ponds needed to accommodate hydraulic fracturing would have an even more significant impact on the landscape than traditional drilling.

Only a small percentage of Ohio's landscape currently is off limits to oil and gas drilling. The Ohio Revised Code does not authorize oil and gas development at state parks, state nature preserves, state historic sites, and the state's lone wilderness area. This leaves the overwhelming majority of Ohio's landscape already open to drilling, including all privately owned land, all state forests and the Wayne National Forest (Ohio's largest single public land mass).

Drilling in Public Lands threatens tourism revenues for local and rural communities. Our state parks attract 50 million visitors each year. Tourism in parks and public lands generates significant revenue to local economies, but resource impacts continue long after active drilling ceases, including site clearance, stream crossings, access road building, periodic maintenance, odors, compressor noise, and fire risks. These impacts—many of them unavoidable—will interfere with the experience of park visitors. A report produced by Longwoods International shows that each tax dollar spent on encouraging Ohio tourism produces \$12 in state and local tax revenues. This revenue would be put at risk if park visitors perceive an interruption of the natural experience that they have come to expect at Ohio's state parks.