**Testimonies on Oversight of Class II Injection Wells in Ohio**

**Summary**

Organization behind this effort: Buckeye Environmental Network, BEN, (Teresa Mills & Roxanne Groff)

Purpose: To convince the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to revoke the primacy of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil & Gas Resource Management, to authorize permits and monitor Class II injection wells, which place waste from hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”), originating from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, into the ground (in 247 injection wells, most of which are located in eastern Ohio).

Meeting to Address this Purpose: On April 10 the BEN organized a (Zoom) meeting to offer the opportunity of several people (around 15) to offer (recorded & written) testimony on their concerns about injection wells and their interest in revoking the primacy of ODNR for these wells. The US EPA has previously deemed ODNR as a legitimate authority to permit and monitor these injection wells. Besides those offering testimony, there were other interested persons participating in the meeting from Ohio, Idaho, and Michigan. The recorded Zoom meeting and written testimonies will be sent to Region V, US EPA by Mills and Groff. There were no representatives from US EPA at the meeting. When the testimonials and recording have been sent to US EPA, BEN will issue a press release (any contact with media about this meeting until that point is discouraged).

Summary of Points Made During Testimonials: I was the first to offer a testimonial. It is included in a separate attachment.

 -From Lake County – There was series of earthquakes in the Youngstown in 2011 most likely due to an injection well that was drilled too deeply; ODNR has a conflict of interest in its mission, i.e.. to promote the oil& gas industry in Ohio and at the same time monitor the injection wells; ODNR does not require remediation on accidents, does not administer penalties, fines, or revocation of permits for accidents like spills and earthquakes.

-From Coshocton County – Overflow of well in the county; brine (from injection wells) is spread on county roads for snow/ice control in the winter and for dust control in the summer (this happens in many counties in the state including ours).

-From Portage County – At a public hearing on injection wells ODNR had arranged armed guards to be present and restricted people from expressing their objections to a proposed injection well in that county.

-From Mahoning County – Earthquakes in 2011; fracking waste present in the Mahoning River, and waste detected in drinking water; also $24 million damage to Niles Reservoir created by fracking waste.

-From Trumbull County – Township trustee reported a leak in an injection well pond affected well water in 2015; no liner in the injection well pad; wildlife died, no fines for owner of well.

-Michelle Garman, a resident of the county reported that she lives adjacent to Copper Ridge injection well that is owned by KDA. In 2015 there was a spill at this site that she reported to ODNR, which she said was unresponsive to her concerns; she said that there is constant truck traffic (mainly from Pennsylvania) outside her home, and the most truck traffic is from 5 pm to 5 am.

From Columbus area – ODNR is ignoring the geology involved in injection wells—earthquakes are caused by fracking waste draining into fractured rocks.

-From Lake County, Leroy Township – Testifier lives one mile from injection well; well is 1,000 feet from wildlife refuge; township water has been contaminated by well waste.

-Cuyahoga County (Ted Auch, organizer of Frack Tracker) – Pennsylvania and West Virginia have very strict limits on injection wells—that’s why fracking waste form those states is coming to Ohio; ODNR does not have enough inspectors to deal with the wells they should monitor; brine waste and natural gas extraction have increased in the time since ODNR was given primacy.

-From Athens County – Lenny Eliason, County Commissioner, expressed his view that ODNR is under-funded for this purpose and issues permits too quickly.

George Banziger

April 14, 2021