May 11, 2022

To the Editor (Marietta Times):

 Congratulations (not a good thing)! Washington County is the number-one county in the state for total brine waste that was injected in 2021- five million barrels.

 There is a pernicious process of gradual pollution and despoilment of Washington County through the injection of brine waste. Residents of Washington County now have an opportunity to put a halt to this tragedy at a public meeting to be held at St. Ambrose Church in Porterfield on June 2 at 6 p.m. This meeting was set by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (Division of Oil & Gas Resources Management) in response to requests from Washington County Commissioners, township trustees of Belpre Township (Little Hocking), and others. The public meeting will give the opportunity for residents of Washington County to air their concerns and pose questions about an application for yet another injection well to be located in our county—this one the second in this particular vicinity of Little Hocking. The company that submitted the application for this injection well is based in Rosedale VA.

 The injection-well industry, which transports and puts brine waste from hydraulic fracturing into the ground, is well established in Washington County; in fact, Ohio—and especially Washington County—can be regarded as the trash heap for the fracking industry. As much as 68% of this brine waste is from out-of-state (PA & WV) sources. Fracking waste is referred to as “brine,” but much of it is radioactive and composed of water containing additional chemicals, such as lead, arsenic, formaldehyde, and mercury. Although only one percent of brine contains these chemicals, when we are dealing with a million gallons of water per production well, this adds up to a significant amount of toxins injected under our county lands and aquifers. An article in the September 5, 2020, *Columbus Dispatch*, reported on a spill at the Redbird #4 well in Washington County. The article indicated that fracking waste had seeped into nearby natural gas production. But an article in *Consumer Reports* stated: “There is risk to leaks from landfills that accept brine waste, when waste spills from trucks or pipelines moving it, when equipment fails, or when waste leaks from unlined disposal pits.” In addition, there was a spill of “brine waste” just outside Marietta in January 2021 at a pipeline owned by Deep Rock Disposal, which is owned by a company in Pennsylvania. There was very little transparency about this spill. And in August 2021 there was a blow out of raw petroleum in Veto Lake in western Washington County. The cause of the Veto Lake petroleum spill has still not been officially determined, but many in the area believe that the constant injection of brine waste (under pressure) is what caused this blow out.

Some oil producers in Washington County have noticed that several of their production wells have been harmed or destroyed by brine waste contamination and are taking legal action to express their concerns on this matter. They can speak for themselves and through their attorneys.

These injection wells produce very few local jobs—a few truckers to haul brine waste to injection wells in the county. But even these jobs will be reduced in number when brine waste arrives here by barge on the Ohio River—coming to a barge off-load facility just outside Marietta. While the business of injection wells provides serious environmental and health risks to the county, it provides little in the way of job growth and economic development.

If you are concerned about this issue, please attend this public meeting.

George Banziger