**Proposal on Brine Waste**

I am writing to urge the commissioners to reconsider and revise their proposal on lifting the state tax limit on brine waste. As I understand it, the proposal from the commissioners involves working with other counties in southeast Ohio to assess a fee for barrels of brine injected into wells in excess of the 500,000 barrels that are assessed by the state. My understanding is that some of the money is to be set aside for spill clean-up, and I commend the county for taking this action to protect its constituents.

In my opinion the fee for number of barrels of brine waste ($.05 from Ohio and $.20 from outside the state) is nowhere near proportional to the long-term health, environmental, and economic risks that all this brine waste (most of which is radioactive and all of which is poisonous) presents to the state. The fee for brine waste, first of all, needs to be raised. Second, the fee should be placed into a separate account (e.g., escrow) to cover future costs of monitoring, clean-up, and emergencies associated with brine-waste disposal. Even the idea of a cap on fees serves as an incentive for disposal companies to continue and likely increase brine waste disposal in the county. A disincentive would be increased fees with no cap.

After the June 2022 meeting at St. Ambrose Church on the proposed new well in Little Hocking, the commissioners were appropriately assertive about gaining more information from ODNR for their constituents. It is disappointing that the commissioners seem to be waving a flag of surrender to the inevitable continuation and growth of brine waste disposal in the county.

I would hope that our commissioners would recognize that the health, environmental, and economic risks of brine disposal are a threat to their constituents and to constituents of our neighboring counties, that needs to be reflected in the fees assessed to assume these risks.