



6/23/2023

The Honorable Matt Dolan
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor Rm. 127
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Jay Edwards
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St., Floor 13
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Ohio Oil and Gas Well Fund – Conference Committee

Dear Chairmen Dolan and Edwards,

The Ohio Oil and Gas Association, API Ohio, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, and The Nature Conservancy of Ohio appreciate the opportunity to express our continued support for the elimination of all earmarks and transfers of the Oil and Gas Well Fund. Through the combined efforts of the House and Senate the current version of House Bill 33 will continue to protect the fund for its intended purpose.

The Oil and Gas Well Fund is funded through severance taxes paid by oil and gas producers. It provides operational resources for the Division of Oil and Gas, as well as money for the state's orphan well plugging program, one of the oldest and most successful programs in the country. The state has identified around 20,000 orphan wells in Ohio, whereas industry research puts the amount at double the state's number. The amount of money needed to plug these wells, the vast majority of which were drilled prior to regulation in the mid-twentieth century, far exceeds the fund's current balance, even with one time money from the federal government.

Removing the transfers, earmarks and protecting the Oil and Gas Well Fund from cash transfers over the next two years will allow Ohio's orphan well plugging program to continue to grow. With recent legislative changes we are hopeful to double the number of wells plugged in the next biennium. Keeping a strong fund is important to achieve these goals.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts as these issues are debated in Conference Committee.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of the below signatories.

Sincerely,



Rob Brundrett
President
Ohio Oil and Gas Association



Chris Zeigler
Executive Director
API Ohio

Pete Bucher

Pete Bucher
Chief of Staff
Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund



Bill Stanley
Ohio Director
The Nature Conservancy

CC: Senator Cirino
Senator Sykes
Representative LaRe
Representative Sweeney
John Barron
Brittney Colvin
Ray DiRossi
Dan Baker