



February 17, 2026

Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 329

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 329 to ban spreading of oil and gas waste brine on roads in Ohio.

I serve as the Southeast Ohio Regional Director for the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund (OEC AF). The OEC AF is an advocacy organization whose vision is a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment. We work in a bipartisan nature with local, state, and federal governments to realize this vision.

Research clearly shows that spreading waste brine from oil and gas production wells is harmful to public health and the environment:

In 2017, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) [released a report detailing that these brine products contain radioactive materials](#) and heavy metals, including radium at levels far exceeding federal drinking water standards. and heavy metals, including radium at levels far exceeding federal drinking water standards. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Radium-226 and Radium-228 are known carcinogens that can increase the risk of bone, liver, and breast cancer when exposure levels are high. ^[1]

Each sample of [brine studied from 107 wells across Ohio](#) in 26 different counties and 10 different formations by ODNR showed waste brine to be too radioactive to discharge into the surrounding environment, according to the Ohio Administrative Code. ^[2]

Current law (R.C. 1509.226) does not require any testing of oil and gas wastewater for radioactivity levels or harmful chemical constituents before it is spread on roadways.

Ohio Department of Health released a study in 2022 that recommended against the use of deicers derived from oil and gas waste brine due to "the increased levels of human exposure to radiation." ^[3]

A peer reviewed study by Dr. Burgos at Penn State University demonstrated that oil and gas waste applied to roadways is ineffective as a dust suppressant and rapidly degrades gravel roads. ^[4]



Ohio Environmental Council
[Action Fund]

Ohio Department of Transportation and Ohio Turnpike Commission have already both discontinued use of deicers derived from oil and gas waste. We need to ensure all governmental entities follow similar rules and instead turn toward safer alternatives.

The practice of spreading oil and gas waste brine onto roadways as a deicer is not a viable solution to the challenge of properly addressing industry waste. Oil and gas waste brine is more harmful than traditional road salt to human and ecological health. In addition to the ecological and human health benefits of preventing the spreading of harmful substances on Ohio's roadways. Furthermore, shifting away from this practice could provide economic opportunities and benefits for Ohio's farmers in burgeoning markets to provide safer alternative deicers and dust suppressants created from beets and soybeans, as is being implemented in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and other states across the country.^[5]

SB329 provides measures that will strengthen public health and safety, protect communities and their waterways from harmful chemicals and radioactivity, and expand economic opportunities for Ohio farmers. Ohioans deserve protection from toxic and radioactive materials on our roads and in our water. I urge you to adopt Senate Bill 329.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Molly Jo Stanley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJS' with a flourish.

Southeast Ohio Regional Director
Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund
Jstanley@theoec.org

Citations:

^[1] Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management Radiation Safety Section Radiological Assessment Special Report <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/21054690-brineaquasalinaodnr-lab-tests2017/>

^[2] Radiation Safety Section Preliminary Brine Study Results <https://benohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/5.-ODNR-Production-Well-Study-Ohio-Wells-are-Highly-Radioactive.pdf>

^[3] Ohio Department of Health Brine Radiation Analysis for Radium Concentrations Radiation Dose [Assessment of Residential Brine Application](#)



Ohio Environmental Council
[Action Fund]

^[4] Oil and gas produced waters fail to meet beneficial reuse recommendations. Farnan et al 2024.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S004896972400946X>

^[5] Von Imhof, Stefan, <https://alternativeassets.substack.com/p/the-economics-of-road-salt>