



**Before the House Public Utilities Committee
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 33
October 9, 2019**

Chairman Callender, Vice Chair Wilkin, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, my name is Stephanie Kromer and I am the Director of Energy and Environmental Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 33.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate and we represent nearly 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

We are pleased to support strengthening protections for critical infrastructure. While fortunately Ohio has not faced the sort of disruptions seen in other jurisdictions, taking this proactive step would protect Ohio's economy and improve our business climate.

Ohio's abundant natural resources, such as Lake Erie and the Ohio River, lead to ports and rail facilities that businesses rely on. Senate Bill 33 would increase penalties for those who physically damage or tamper with these types of critical infrastructure projects. These projects include, but are not limited to telecommunications networks, railroads, pipelines, electric generating facilities, and water sewer systems. Destruction to certain infrastructure projects could also be harmful to the health and safety of the public.

Critics of SB 33 claim that the bill will infringe on their constitutional right to peacefully protest; however, this premise is misguided. If an individual physically destroys or tampers with a critical infrastructure project, this bill will allow local decision makers to decide whether to prosecute these actions. SB 33 will contribute to the growth of Ohio's economy and will ensure that current and future capital investments in the state are safe from physical damage.

SB 33 strengthens protections for critical infrastructure to better safeguard public safety and the environment and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce urges your support.