

LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – March 19, 2013

LWVO Lobbyist Report

Fracking

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Both Executive and Legislative branches of State government are very supportive of natural gas production in Ohio. Complicating citizen input, decisions on location of the hydraulic fracturing (aka fracking) wells were taken away from local jurisdictions by 125-HB278.

The League does not have a position on fracking, but used its positions on water and natural resources to testify on **129-SB315** (the Energy Bill). LWVO testimony on this bill emphasized two points relating to fracking:

Disclosure: Industry is currently allowed to keep secret the identities of the any of the chemicals used that it considers trade secrets. Further, Ohio's rules say that no chemicals have to be identified prior to their use (injection). The League supports full disclosure prior to injection.

Setbacks: There is limited scientific evidence as to how close to people and water supplies drilling should be allowed (aka setbacks). Such evidence as exists suggests current setbacks for drilling are inadequate.

Other concerns of LWVO relating to fracking include:

Radiation: Fracking waste (aka brine or flowback), which can be stored in deep pits (aka injection wells), contains an unknown amount of radioactive material, which is exempt from hazardous waste laws.

Water withdrawal: The huge amounts of water needed in this kind of drilling potentially threaten Lake Erie and its tributaries. The US EPA is studying fracking's effects on surface and ground water.

Previous LWVO action on fracking is on our web page. In addition, LWVO board member Kristin Vessey is providing resources to—and facilitating email discussion among—Leagues and League members interested in learning more about fracking. If you would like to be part of that conversation, email Kris at kvessey@woh.rr.com.