

Smith Industries, Inc.

BILL: **Senate Bill 460**; Subtitle 5. Office of the Environmental and Natural Resources Ombudsman

COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

DATE: February 17, 2020

POSITION: **Unfavorable Report**

Smith Industries, Inc. respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB 614.

The public website, that this bill would create, would be a disaster. It would encourage any party or person to file complaints or accusations, whether based on fact or not, just to create malicious publicity. In essence, it would encourage public bullying.

The increase in these filings would still have to be investigated by the very agencies that claim to be understaffed to handle this now. The result would be an increase the time needed to investigate and arrive at a determination in these complaints, making it appear that the agencies are inept to expeditiously handle them.

All information on real violations of environmental standards and consequential actions by the agencies are available through the Freedom of Information Act now, which anyone can request. Such a proposed public website would only encourage a barrage of complaints based on speculation, bias and character assassination and diminish the agency's ability to investigate real violators.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony against a favorable report on Senate Bill 460.

Paul Tharp
Information Officer
Smith Industries, Inc.