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Written Testimony of Private Citizen
SB0878 - Oil and Natural Gas - Hydraulic Fracturing - Authorization
(Sponsors - Senators Hershey, Folden, and McKay)
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Request: **UNFAVORABLE** report for the following reasons:

Hydraulic Fracturing in Maryland was banned in 2017 by passage of a bill presented in this very committee, SB0740/ HB1325. Known as Fracking, this process of injecting pressurized liquids with toxic chemicals into the aquifer to extract natural gas was and remains a threat to the health, quality of life and economy of our communities in Western Maryland. While private land rights advocates claim it is their right to choose if this harmful process can occur on their land or not, we know that the impacts cannot be isolated to the artificial boundaries of their property.

Personally, my neighbor a ¼ mile away had their water well hydraulically fracked, a process very similar to gas extraction without the harmful chemicals. Within hours my well was muddy and then went dry for almost 2 weeks. The process destroys underground structures in the geology and aquifer of the area creating unknown amounts of unnatural damage. If this had been a large-scale gas fracking operation wells and properties for tens of miles around would have been negatively impacted and polluted.

Our local economy is based largely on nature and outdoor recreation tourism that relies on the rural and natural character of our County. Industrializing the roads and landscapes with toxic water, air pollution and noise from drilling and destruction of our rural roads with heavy truck traffic equals destruction of our economy and our quality of life. And these negative impacts would remain long after any short-term profits for the few are extracted from our lands.

I do not know the other 2 Senators, but Senator McKay makes his living spreading toxic chemicals to remove organic materials from things so this is no surprise that he would support such a bill. A consummate showman with a constant need for attention from his absurd theatrics, I hope you will send him back to his polluting dry cleaning shop empty handed. It is the democratic process to allow this type of absurdity be heard but when I proposed a bill to provide property owners with a voice in Wild Youghiogheny land management, promised by DNR policy, he indicated the General Assembly was too poor this year to entertain such frivolous bills. Yet here we are.

For our health, quality of life and the long-term sustainability of our economy in Garrett County, once touted as Maryland's best kept secret, this bill should receive an **UNFAVORABLE** report from this honorable committee.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Storck