

People's Public Hearing on HB 2598 Transcript

08:01:58 My name is Samuel Heckman.

08:02:01 I'm the executive director of the West Virginia chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

08:02:06 It's my honor to have been asked to host this inaugural people's public hearing on house Bill 2598 altering the definition of an above ground storage tank.

08:02:21 This hearing has been organized by public interest groups, including, West Virginia rivers coalition, West Virginia Environmental Council, West Virginia citizen Action Group, West Virginia Sierra Club, and the Ohio Valley environmental coalition.

08:02:38 Why is it necessary to hold a people's public hearing on this important issue, public hearings on bills of interest during the legislative session, used to be guaranteed.

08:02:51 It was a time honored tradition that allowed legislators to benefit from hearing the opinions and experiences of a regular West Virginians.

08:03:02 So long as a request was made within the established roles of the West Virginia House of Delegates and public hearing was mandatory.

08:03:11 However, 2021 role changes in the house have made it difficult or even impossible to successfully request a public hearing multiple requests for public hearing on House Bill 2598 were denied by Chairman Anderson or the House Energy and manufacturing committee

08:03:30 and Chairman pack of the house Health and Human Resources Committee and early February more than 40 organizations sent a letter to Senate and House leaders, requesting that every effort be made to ensure public access during the 2021 legislative session,

08:03:48 including reversing house rules have made public hearings unlikely.

08:03:53 On the plus side, a virtual public hearing on house bill 2389 authorizing the Department of Environmental Protection to promulgate, the legislative rule relating to requirements governing water quality standards, has been scheduled.

08:04:10 I House Judiciary chair Capitan hearing has been scheduled for 9am.

08:04:17 On Monday, March 1.

08:04:20 We anticipate that details on the Judiciary Committee website will be available soon.

08:04:26 You can start by visiting the legislature's website @ www.wvlegislature.gov.

08:04:35 Then navigate to house, then committee.

08:04:39 Then judiciary, and if necessary to committee agenda is under that town.

08:04:47 Ensure the West Virginia legislature could be doing more to guarantee public access during the legislative session and we certainly encourage them to do so.

08:04:57 Now, for the people's public hearing process to make this as realistic and experience as possible.

08:05:03 You've been given short notice and asked to arrive early in the morning and your time will be limited.

08:05:08 Like a public hearing in the West Virginia legislature. This people's public hearing will feature speakers who are in favor or it comes to the legislation that's being discussed in this case, hospital 25 Minute.

08:05:23 Each speaker has pre registered before last night, 8pm deadline.

08:05:27 Each speaker will have up to one and one half minutes to make their comments.

08:05:34 At the end of that time.

08:05:36 You will be given a cue and you will have a few seconds to wrap up your remarks.

08:05:42 We will need to move on to the next speaker.

08:05:45 So, if we have to mute people and move to the next speaker. Unfortunately, our time is limited.

08:05:52 If you did not register to speak. You are free and encouraged to post comments or questions in the chat box or on Facebook.

08:06:03 The organizers will also monitor the chat for questions from legislators and from the media for a question and answer session briefly toward the end of this hour.

08:06:15 Following the meeting.

08:06:17 Your organizers will release information about the people's public hearing to the media.

08:06:24 So now it's time to welcome our first speaker, Mr. Paul Brewer.

08:06:31 Welcome.

08:06:47 Good morning.

08:06:48 Can you hear me now.

08:06:50 Yes, I do.

08:06:51 Great. Thank you.

08:06:53 Appreciate the opportunity to speak.

08:06:56 I've been with the white water industry since 1969.

08:07:00 I've seen, millions of people have joy The Clean Waters the New River and the river.

08:07:06 We need to keep this rivers rivers clean all the rivers can haul river every river clean for the people, health, but also Tourism Tourism means jobs in this state, tourism is now growing.

08:07:22 We have a great opportunity to expand our tourism.

08:07:26 And we need to be vigilant against these types of bills that are passing through the legislature and oppose any change. I mean we're a leader right now and vaccination in the health of our citizens of West Virginia.

08:07:45 So why do we want to change and go back to being listed as 49th in the in the United States have clean water. That's just wrong.

08:07:56 So we need clean jobs we need clean water, and it would help the tourism business, it would just help the economy and the health the health of the citizens of West Virginia.

08:08:08 Appreciate the opportunity to speak.

08:08:15 Thank you so much Mr Byrne we'd like to now move on to our second speaker, Mr. Gary luck.

08:08:24 Thanks fam.

08:08:25 My name is Gary socket.

08:08:28 And I am executive director of Western Genesis and Action Group.

08:08:33 And I just like to say that the above ground storage tank act as it was passed was a good law.

08:08:39 It's not broken and it doesn't need fixed House Bill 2598 will break it.

08:08:45 Taking away protections against fracking fluids getting into our tap water intakes is not a good idea.

08:08:52 What are these fracking fluids, the chemical engineering news of the American Chemical Society says this in an article entitled figuring out fracking wastewater, quote, The Frak

08:09:05 can waste of organics metals and radioactive materials, some of these substances get put into the water as fracking fluid additives summer form during degradation or transformation reactions and some come from the underground geologic formations.

08:09:22 This is not just salty water as many would like to suggest and it's the tanks in containers holding it should be monitored and tested according to the existing law when they're too close to public water intakes.

08:09:34 This is not the Brian you want to marinate your turkey Yeah.

08:09:38 So what's the real situation here Why do we have this bill for us.

08:09:42 This bill is taking us backwards to six to ease the burden on the oil and gas industry and industry that has extracted millions and billions of dollars of wealth from West Virginia.

08:09:54 What about the burden of nine counties not having water drink or only approved use of the water coming out of your tabs to flush your toilet

08:10:04 time already. Okay, well thank you. I'm just here to ask every lawmaker

08:10:10 from every and keep the protections already in code. Thank you.

08:10:16 Thank you.

08:10:17 Our next speaker will be Miss battery and followed by Mr. Dave McMahon.

08:10:29 Thank you, Sam, can you hear me okay.

08:10:33 Yes, thank you.

08:10:35 Thank you, Sam and the sponsors of this hearing.

08:10:39 I'm Betty regard, I'm an independent volunteer citizen advocate.

08:10:44 And I've been around the legislature for 30 years, this time, totally from home.

08:10:51 And during the water spill in 2014 I was at the legislature, working as staff, and not in charge of the information desk by the second story rotunda.

08:11:03 And I drank water all day without knowing what you know what was in it became ill, and then became ill again when I flushed the pipes.

08:11:15 At house where I was staying in Charleston.

08:11:18 And I don't wish this experience on anyone.

08:11:22 I've seen us developed was I've seen them eroded steadily.

08:11:27 And I think from hearing the testimony in the, in the Energy Committee. This would be a major step backward.

08:11:35 I agree that the laws, working from what I heard it's preventing were situations from happening. And keeping the industry alert as to what needs to be done.

08:11:45 And I post this lot I respectfully ask the legislators to oppose it also.

08:11:52 Thank you.

08:11:53 Thank you.

08:11:55 Our next speaker is Mr. Dave McMahon followed by Mr hunter Starks.

08:12:02 I'm Dave McMahon, I'm a lawyer, I'm a co founder of the West Virginia surface owner's rights organization. We have 800 people who pay dues. But let's Virginia has a population of 1.8 million about 100,000 lives in municipalities.

08:12:16 So we like to say we surface inner speak for the other 1 million, who live in the country.

08:12:37 And there are 70,000 oil and gas wells on those citizens. Many of those wells have Brian tanks. There's also a separate category of oil tanks. Yes, they have secondary containment they're supposed to which is a date around a date around the outside, but
08:12:39 those things leak.

08:12:41 If it's still in the secondary containment if there's a crowded horizontally. I've seen it leak out.

08:12:47 Now I've heard him say well, oil tanks are going to be empty because they want to get the money. Well, maybe, maybe have to wait for enough to make it worth the trip.

08:12:55 Brian takes not so much wants to deliver gets the Brian tanker truck it's got to pay to dispose of it. As pointed out earlier Brian is a euphemism yes in some areas that can be good on roads but depending on formations.

08:13:06 There are lots of hydrocarbons, you would not want to mess with current law requires requires inspections of eight or 900 things into the tank.

08:13:15 It stuns me is, these are not wells that are five hours away these are ones that are five minutes to five hours away.

08:13:24 But there is no requirement for the state to inspect the other 69,000 oil and gas wells Let me say that again. that was there was a mistake, someone said that another hearing.

08:13:34 There are 69,000 where there is no requirement for inspection. And this bill two passes will add another 800. Right now we have one, oil and gas inspector for every 5000 wells, one for every 5000 used to be one for every 3500, but the budgets been cut.

08:13:52 The operator has on the spectrum once a year, but no one checks to see if the operators been inspecting.

08:13:57 So they want to eliminate inspections by any other agency, other than oil and gas inspections aren't going to happen.

08:14:03 This is a bad bill, and the opposite of oil and gas needs to restore it. What it's going from 14 to 25

08:14:12 It employs with one inspector for every 5000 opposite bloating, gas budget needs to go back to where it was and above that, in order to inspect all these wells on a regular basis.

08:14:22 Thank you very much to the sponsors of this year.

08:14:25 Thank you.

08:14:27 Our next speaker is hunter Starks, followed by David Lillard.

08:14:51 I don't see hunter Starks in our participant list.

08:15:01 David Lillard, followed by Angie Rosser. I thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is David Lillard, I live in Jefferson County, West Virginia.

08:15:08 I urge the legislature to reject Hb 2598, you know any of us who own a car or a truck has to maintain the vehicle so that it's safe to operate, so that we don't hurt somebody.

08:15:22 If it's not safe to operate.

08:15:26 And we were required to pass an annual inspection.

08:15:29 Certainly, if all of us, the people can do our part to protect public safety.

08:15:36 The the companies who store hazardous chemicals can do the same. They can properly maintain their facilities and undergo annual inspection.

08:15:49 It's not too big a burden.

08:15:51 This bill passed unanimously.

08:15:54 The provision in the bill, and the above ground storage tank Act passed unanimously 2014. Nothing has changed. I would urge the legislature to do the right thing.

08:16:04 Thank

08:16:08 you so much Mr. Miller next Miss, Angie Rosser, followed by Eric angle.

08:16:15 Good morning. I'm Angie Ross are the executive director of the West Virginia rivers coalition and we stand and strong opposition to House Bill 2598, we have been involved with the above ground storage tank x since 2014 and has seen it get chipped away

08:16:33 to where it's a mere shell of what it originated as. And this is our last stand when it comes to these oil and gas tanks, we compromise compromise compromise to keep these zones of critical concern protected because they, they are where it is most crucial

08:16:49 to provide oversight to protect our public drinking water. So why is this bill so dangerous one because of what I just said these tanks are sitting closest to our drinking water intakes.

08:17:02 Number two, they contain we know that a mixture of very toxic chemicals that are harmful to human health, and three there's, there's just no fallback if these tanks are exempt.

08:17:13 There is essentially no oversight and leaves our drinking water at risk. We also know these tanks are the poorest performing tanks and to 2019 of all of the leaks of tanks in West Virginia, two out of three of them were these tanks two out of three were

08:17:27 oil and gas tanks. So we urge the legislature to reject this bill to stand up for West Virginians who want competence in their drinking water supplies we want peace of mind we want to attract and retain our citizens.

08:17:40 And we know that rolling back protections to drinking water will have the opposite effect. Please, reject 2598 Thank you.

08:17:50 Thank you. And next speaker is Eric angle, followed by Mari Johnson.

08:17:57 Good morning, my name is Eric angle I reside in Parkersburg House of Delegates district 10, one of my delegate delegate john Kelly is lead sponsor on House Bill 2598.

08:18:08 I'm here today to help stress by House Bill 2598 must never be allowed to become law.

08:18:14 This legislation to quote from the Charleston Gazette would remove tanks containing 210 barrels or less of Brian water or other fluids produced in connection with hydrocarbon production activities in zones of critical concern from regulation under the

08:18:28 above ground storage tank act according to the seventh edition of the compendium of scientific medical and media findings demonstrating risks and harms of fracking, a fully referenced 475 page compilation provided by the concern health professionals of

08:18:43 of New York, and physicians for social social responsibility. The 2005 Energy Policy Act exempts hydraulic fracturing from key provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

08:18:54 As a result of fracking chemicals have been protected from public scrutiny as trade secrets. Companies are not compelled to fully disclose the identity of chemicals used in fracking fluid, their quantities or their fate once injected underground of the

08:19:06 more than 1000 chemicals that are confirmed ingredients in fracking fluid and estimated 100 are known as endocrine disruptors acting is reproductive and developmental toxic events, and at least 48 or potentially carcinogenic.

08:19:20 Adding to this mix of heavy metals radioactive elements Brian and volatile organic compounds which occur naturally in deep geological formations and which can be carried up from the fracking zone with the flow back fluid, a 2020 study identified.

08:19:34 Okay, thank you. I'm going to ask that you oppose HP 2598 protect our water in West Virginia. Thank you.

08:19:47 Thank you Mr rank Our next speaker is Mari Johnson, followed by Barry, Wendell.

08:20:02 Start talking with that thing unmuted. Good morning. More Johnson from Monroe County, West Virginia, almost done with the purest water in the world.

08:20:14 Pose, HB 2598 tale story, 2014 a few days after the water crisis hit Charleston. I went to Charleston to fly out early morning flight to California my daughter's wedding planning a little bit late leaving.

08:20:31 I asked the stewardess that morning, what was happening, she says, Oh, we won't stay in Charleston.

08:20:36 They had to fly their employees to Roanoke to stay in Roanoke, this is an economic issue, people are leaving the state you travel anywhere, lots of places I've traveled to Washington State of California with dollars in the Navy.

08:20:51 And we're kind of known as the place that's destroying our water.

08:20:55 Everybody whether you're a municipal water or well water or spring water dissolves clean water, if this bill passes the people who voted for the illnesses and possible das that occur from will be on your shoulders.

08:21:10 I post strongly oppose 2598. Every West Virginia deserves clean water.

08:21:18 Thank you so much for your comments are not next speaker is very window, followed by Regina Hendrix.

08:21:26 Good morning. I'm Barry when del, I'm a city councilor in the city of Morgantown I represent the seventh ward.

08:21:35 We in West Virginia are concerned about the declining population in our state, especially in cities like Charleston.

08:21:42 One reason people don't want to come here is because of the Freedom Industries spill in 2014. No one will want to move fair if we make it easier for our water to be polluted by fluids from extractive industries.

08:21:57 Do you want people to move here, or do you want another giveaway to the fossil fuel industry. You can't have both reject 2598. Thank you.

08:22:11 Thank you so much for your comments Mr window or next, next speaker is Regina Hendrix, followed by Margaret worth.

08:22:20 Good morning, my name is Regina hundred five was born in the chemical Valley, a long time ago. I'm living in Charlestown now because I left the valley me close I was concerned about the water in the air so I'm here to speak on behalf of the economy and

08:22:39 and the environment. I've watched the poisoning of the wells in the southern part of the state. I watched what happened in Charleston. I read every time, every year that we're losing population.

08:22:55 Well, we have a bad reputation already and I asked you to please reject House Bill 2598.

08:23:08 Thank you.

08:23:08 Next speaker will be worth worth, followed by Duane Nichols.

08:23:28 there's no one in our participant list, under the name Margaret work.

08:23:33 Thank you. Marie work doesn't appear in the last, maybe she'll join us later.

08:23:38 Next speaker will be Duane Nichols, followed by, I mean, Kirkman.

08:23:54 Do I Nichols does not appear in our participants list.

08:23:59 Again, we'll keep going through to the next speaker.

08:24:02 I mean Kirkman followed by Tracy, Dan z.

08:24:08 Thanks for giving us a chance to speak today. HB 2598 would put the drinking water at risk, and 27 counties. Now I hear a lot of talk about the need to attract businesses to West Virginia.

08:24:21 When businesses choose a location they looked at a lot of different factors but one of the most important is quality of life. What business owner in their right mind would bring their employees and their families to live in a place where the drinking

08:24:35 water was a cocktail that included radium and crude oil.

08:24:40 That could happen under HB 2598 hear about the high cost of West Virginians poor health.

08:24:47 I'm pretty healthy, my mom wouldn't let me drink soda. She cooked bean soup chicken and dumplings. I'm afraid that those traditional dishes or that nice clean water would not have been as good for me if my mom cook with benzene graph or a sprinkler design,

08:25:03 or maybe a little radium in that cup of water I drank.

08:25:07 Well that contaminated drinking water due to our children.

08:25:10 What will be the cost over their lifetimes. Why on earth would we do this to our own kids, West Virginia is fortunate to have plenty of butter, please keep it safe for human use, please oppose HB 2598.

08:25:28 Thank you.

08:25:30 Thank you.

08:25:47 Next speaker will be Tracy, dancing, followed by Linda frame. Tracy DNZ is not present in our participant list.

08:26:09 Thank you. Remember, frame, followed by quantum King.

08:25:59 Thank you, Sam, and good morning, can you hear me.

08:26:05 Yes, Thank you.

08:26:07 Thank you.

08:26:10 My name is Linda Frank, and I am president of the West Virginia Environmental Council. For those of you who are not familiar with us. We are an umbrella organization of environmental groups across the state and have been so for 30 years.

08:26:24 We decided along with the other sponsors for this hearing that this was important to do after being declined through the normal public hearing request process, because we represent people from across this great state deserve to have a voice in the decisions

08:26:38 that impact their air and water.

08:26:41 On Tuesday, the House Energy Committee heard from scientists who answer questions about the bill. They discussed the term Brian explaining that as much more than salt water as other speakers have already explained in industry lobbyists was also questioned

08:26:55 on Tuesday. He and a delegate remember together how some small tank owners in his district had to choose, had closed due to regulations costing some constituents, their access to free gas.

08:27:08 They remember how they work together to restore that access, and they talked about how this bill could put small tank owners out of business.

08:27:16 Just made me think of the choice, West Virginians are often forced to make choosing between the benefits of having industries in our state and living with the position that they create legislators please ask yourself if you want your constituents to have

08:27:32 to make this choice because voting yes on this bill. you will be making that choice for them. And don't your constituents deserve clean, safe drinking water.

08:27:43 If HB 2598 comfortable for you for a vote, please.

08:27:48 And at the very least, please table this bill until it is safe for your constituents to be in our Capitol Building.

08:27:54 Thank you so much for the opportunity today to speak out against the so.

08:28:01 Thank you.

08:28:01 Our next speaker will be quantum Tang.

08:28:15 Oh by Pamela garrison.

08:28:08 Thank you. So, the, the disaster, seven years ago it was one of the two or three things that really motivated me to go and get my master's degree in Public Health.

08:28:19 I learned a lot from my environmental and history classes there. One of the most important things was that we need regulations on hazardous and polluting industry it's like this because there aren't a second chances.

08:28:28 When it comes to the population public health harming the water can cause, you know, lifelong harm to entire communities, especially the youth that were supposed to protect at the committee hearing earlier this week, the oil and gas lobbyists said we'll

08:28:43 be able to trust tank owners to ensure their things are up to par and safe. Think we have decades of evidence in West Virginia, United States the entire world that prove otherwise disasters do happen there's little punishment for them.

08:28:54 Whereas, people like us have to drink in brief those mistakes.

08:28:57 So, this law should not pass and, you know, we can't trust them to do that themselves and so we need things like this. Thank you.

08:29:06 Thank you Mr. King Our next speaker is Pamela garrison, followed by Karen, Ireland.

08:29:15 Hello everyone.

08:29:26 I'm from Fayette County. I was originally from Raleigh County, I'm going to my younger days, because it was such a nice place to raise a family starting out of family.

08:29:30 I found a nice little play house in Mandan, it was a it was a nice community people hung on the white picket fence visit each other we had to thrive and school, churches, and nice school my husband talk basketball to the little guys, I had two little

08:29:48 girls that were played in the dark and play along the creek, the creek runs from one and all the way through to the river to New River.

08:29:59 And after a few years there.

08:30:01 We started getting the news that bad that barrels of PCB that had been stored in mines had leaked and had leaked into our community into our Creek, the floods had made it get into our soul and wherever it flooded the bank solid dollar yards.

08:30:25 And I ended up with that.

08:30:27 I ended up seeing animals running around the neighborhood without a bit of hair on them. I want to address the, the After Effects because after the chemicals are there.

08:30:38 It's to like do the ground you can get rid of it.

08:30:43 We saw dogs run around the neighborhood was no hair every friend just about I had the younger ones that was younger than me, are dead now have some kind of cancer.

08:30:55 And the whole community is devastated.

08:30:59 Most of the houses has been abandoned failing and they've tore down there was a few families live still trying to fight for justice. I ended up having to move.

08:31:14 I was paying for a house I couldn't live in. I couldn't sell it because of the PCBs nobody wanted to live their time, and the devastation is just, I just want to say you can't after it's there, it's too late.

08:31:26 So I post this Thank you.

08:31:29 Thank you, Mrs Carson for raising up the story of mental notes residents.

08:31:34 Our next speaker will be Karen Ireland, followed by Jane Addams more.

08:31:41 Good morning. Thank you, Sam Thank you everyone for doing this. My name is Karen Ireland, I am I worked for the Sierra Club now that I'm here as a private citizen to talk a little bit about why I oppose this bill.

08:31:57 Last year I worked as a lobbyist for the West Virginia Environmental Council, and on January 9, perhaps as an anniversary present for the citizens of West Virginia, the legislature introduced this exact bill.

08:32:13 And, you know, it was like perfect timing for us in terms of messaging because the brazenness of rolling back this piece of legislation on the anniversary of something that devastated our community and I'm talking about the freedom link was just over

08:32:30 the top, and we had hundreds of people call and email and come in.

08:32:36 So what's changed. Well, the capitals on lockdown.

08:32:41 Nobody has to to look their constituents in the eye as we've seen with the refusal of the legislature to grant a public hearing on this.

08:32:52 And I think they, they think they can do what they wanted to do. Originally, which was to roll back this protection.

08:32:59 But the problem is, What they're saying is not true. It's not salt water. It's not just a little bit of Brian, just a barrel of Brian well we know that that's, you know, upwards of 8500 8800 gallons of material that can include benzene can include heavy

08:33:19 metals can include radioactive materials.

08:33:24 And so I think challenge their assumptions.

08:33:29 Stay strong, and I hope that the legislators will go to oppose this bill. Thank you.

08:33:35 Thank you.

08:33:36 Our next speaker is Gene Evans more powered by Sarah Karbala.

08:33:44 The morning everybody. I'm Dr. Evans more. I was born and raised here in West Virginia, that conch shell is where I was born.

08:33:51 I am.

08:33:55 I'm just I'm just look as to how people can plan to kill other people, which is exactly what they're doing, my little kids have lived here in West Virginia, many of them all their lives.

08:34:05 I moved away and came back.

08:34:07 I came back to what I thought was Junior was why in God's name would you want to do something to continue killing people. It makes no sense to me. I've heard so many speakers, prior to me who know all the details.

08:34:25 I know a little bit about fracking.

08:34:27 This does not make sense. I tried to figure out how to make sense cool stuff there isn't there isn't there.

08:34:38 She just content to kill people on the pretense of needing money, needing the jobs. You don't have people. The jobs no do you any good people in fact the move and leave here, I try my dammedest to not have to leave West Virginia again.

08:34:59 So, do this, us a little bit of common sense will pretend that you don't have the common sense. Just Baker.

08:35:07 Baker.

08:35:09 Thank you.

08:35:11 Thank you.

08:35:13 Our next speaker is Morgan.

08:35:15 I'm sorry Sarah carballo, followed by Morgan King.

08:35:27 Good morning. I'm Sarah carballo. I'm here today to speak on behalf of the Ohio Valley environmental coalition and our membership, but also as a concern resident of Huntington, West Virginia.

08:35:31 One of the many communities that relies on the Ohio River for our public drinking water utility House Bill 2598 would roll back protections adopted in response to the 2014 freedom industry spill that contaminated the drinking water supply for nearly 300,000

08:35:46 people, and the canal Valley and surrounding communities.

08:35:58 In the aftermath of that disaster became evident we're not well prepared to respond to large scale water contamination events. Water Safety and Security should be our priority at all levels of government, not only related to natural disasters that man

08:36:03 made ones as well.

08:36:05 We don't know the extent of the health and environmental impacts of many chemicals contained in the storage tanks located in zones of critical concern.

08:36:14 And that fact in and of itself should be cause for more concern and more proactive measures, not fewer.

08:36:20 We stand in opposition to House Bill 2598 and respectfully urge the legislature to reject this amendment to the above ground storage tank act. Thank you.

08:36:31 Thank you.

08:36:33 The next speaker is Morgan King, followed by Mark Steyn.

08:36:40 Good morning. I'm from Charleston, West Virginia, and was a senior at Capitol High School in the 2014 water crisis occurred at the time I was shocked such a crisis could happen in my hometown and saw the fairly swift response of the above ground storage

08:36:53 act as security that a crisis of that scale will not harm my family, or community again. It inspired me to push through studies and civil and environmental engineering and now in public policy.

08:37:03 I've learned those sense that the threat of water inequities in our state is far more complex and unfortunately political than my naive 17 year old self believed the alleged gain of this policy would be and I quote, thousands upon thousands of dollars

08:37:18 to companies attempt, attempting to exempt their tanks from the act. In reality the actual loss of this policy. If another spill occurs is the risk of the health of thousands upon thousands of lives to costs of our local businesses if they have to shut

08:37:33 down again, such as in 2014.

08:37:35 I'm taught in public policy school the importance of analyzing policymaking through a critical lens to determine the best outcome. Yet, in Hb 2598, it's clear the costs far outweigh the claim to benefits.

08:37:50 If we want industry to come and thrive in our state. We must make it a safe place to live for our people first. That was protecting our fundamental and abundant resource water.

08:38:01 Therefore I oppose this law and urge lawmakers to do so as well. Thank you.

08:38:07 Thank you very much. Next speaker is Mark Bowman's day and followed by Matt Adkins.

08:38:24 Marco and singing start in the participants list.

08:38:28 He will move on to Matt Atkins, followed by Daniel, what's.

08:38:35 Good morning, Mr Speaker, my name is Matthew Atkins, I live in Huntington, and I'm a Marshall University student, as well as the treasurer of Marshall University sustainability club.

08:38:43 I post hospital 2598 altering above ground stores things. I grew up in a small town called branch land here in West Virginia in 2014 our state face of water crisis which did not allow me or anyone in my school district to attend for several months.

08:38:56 I was 16 at the time and we did not know that this event would be a defining moment in our lives or their states. This water crisis was a chemical spill MCA Jim chemical that is toxic and little is known about this chemical end up causing Iroquois damages

08:39:09 to not only our state but our economy in our environment.

08:39:12 The United States Congress in 1976 passed a law called the Toxic Substances Control Act, which regulates the introduction new chemicals, MCHM and 10s of thousands of other chemicals were introduced before 1976 so minimal research and testing her available

08:39:24 on them. With this minimal amount of testing and research we will never know the long term effects of this chemical spill will have on West Virginia, West Virginia is a beautiful state.

08:39:34 However, with the introduction of this bill. It says we take it for granted, hospital 2598 if made it to all would endanger every citizen, the way the MCA gym and nature myself my family's lives.

08:39:44 If passed it will leave a window for businesses to take their business elsewhere, as well as young people, myself, such as myself, see this builds a smack to the face redefining our relationship with West Virginia, looking to either state or more than

08:39:56 likely leave when voting on this bill. I urge our legislative to take into consideration their constituents shoes and their family shoes. Do they want to come home to tell their children they cannot base to their wife they cannot cook, or tell her husband

08:40:10 they came a shower. No one should ever have to worry if their water is safe or not. I urge our legislative to vote no on has 25 Hospital 2598.

08:40:20 I do the rest of my time.

08:40:22 Thank you so much. It's great to learn about the sustainability club at Marshall, my undergraduate alma mater.

08:40:30 Our next speaker is Daniel, what's our by Elise Gooding

08:40:41 Daniels on our participants list.

08:40:45 If you will move on the list, good and followed by Joseph Gordon.

08:40:57 Can you hear me now.

08:40:59 Thank you. Yes.

08:41:00 Okay, sorry, I just realized I was muted. I'm Good morning, my name is least getting, I just graduated from Marshall University with a degree in diabetics and hopes of attending medical school.

08:41:12 Because of this, I'm looking at my options for the future in terms of where I want to go to medical school and build a life because West Virginia is my home, I want to consider it a strong contender for my future.

08:41:23 however bills like Hb 2598 make me reconsider this, the excessive use of dangerous chemicals has made West Virginia, a hub of cancer and thyroid issues with people being much more likely to suffer a myriad of illnesses, just because they were born here.

08:41:39 This makes me feel both unsafe and extremely frustrated and want to live somewhere that cares about its people and not just the profit of companies, HV 2598 since the message that citizens don't matter, and whatever can be done to make things easier for

08:41:54 companies that can ruin our health will be done bills like this, or why so many are moving out of West Virginia as soon as they are old enough to. Because of this, I urge you to vote no on House Bill 2598, thank you and I use the rest of my time.

08:42:09 Thank you so much.

08:42:11 Our next speaker will be Joseph golden, followed by john David.

08:42:19 Morning everyone, or live in Beckley, I'd like to just make a few comments for the history of the free ministry chemical league in 2014.

08:42:30 We the citizens of West Virginia cannot trust the rest of the owners of above ground stories needs to maintain and monitor their tanks to prevent leakages.

08:42:41 Furthermore, if a politicians in West Virginia want to encourage economic development our state, especially in areas such as tourism.

08:42:54 We cannot

08:42:57 feel that tourists will come to West Virginia, if they know there is a leak tourism tourists will not make a differentiation between a leak into the corner of the tiger, the South Potomac the tug river behind Gila, or any other river or stream or Creek

08:43:14 in West Virginia. They will basically feel that a leakage into all the waters of West Virginia, and will not wish to visit our state.

08:43:29 People won't come to West Virginia if they feel the water is polluted and will be poisoning them politicians can take an ounce of prevention five maintain the law as it is.

08:43:42 or later pay a ton of cure to deal with the economic backlash from people not coming to West Virginia because our borders of poison. Thank you for your time.

08:43:55 Thank you. The next speaker is john, David, followed by Maya Meyer Thomas.

08:44:05 Morning john David. I'm the founder and 40 year veteran of the page Kincaid public service district.

08:44:13 I think we need to remember that the river water spring water and public water is all owned by the people of West Virginia, we're entitled to clean water and to maintain it.

08:44:26 Basically, this is a, this bill is a license to kill to kill people.

08:44:32 I think that we know have to recognize that whatever is put into tanks is sometimes an often not known company.

08:44:45 br they're taken over by other firms, we don't know what's going on. I have personally seen tanks that have bullet holes in them because they've been targets of guns and shots and things of that nature.

08:44:57 I'm also concerned about storage tanks in other states that feed the public water supply, such as in Virginia, where the New River flows and contaminants come in from storage tanks and facility, as, as well.

08:45:15 Basically, West Virginia American Water, which takes New River water doesn't know what's coming in, they don't have EPA regulations that are current to monitor it.

08:45:26 They have told me that they're not in fact going to put up a put in a storage tank, because they're not obligated to.

08:45:34 And so what you have here is what is flowing in through the blue stone Dam, you know, hit and miss basis.

08:45:43 You don't know what's what's, What's flowing into the water supply.

08:45:49 I think that with bankruptcies climate change and everything else we have to make sure that the storage tanks, all of them, even in adjoining states that feed our rivers can properly.

08:46:02 Thank you.

08:46:04 Thank you.

08:46:05 Our next speaker is my admire Thomas, followed by awesome crowd.

08:46:11 And then we'll give the folks who were not available in the queue earlier a chance to let us move through here. So next is Maya. Maya, Thomas alibi autumn crow.

08:46:26 First off, thank you very much for making this available for us the EC and just shame on our officials for disallowing the citizens that voted them and to speak.

08:46:39 So my name is Maya I work for a watershed group in West Virginia, I am here as an independent citizen. However, I will not mention their name, and I grew up I remember as a 13 year old, I believe, at my father's real estate business conference meetings

08:47:00 with our elected officials.

08:47:03 Joe man should be one and saying to them. What are you going to do about our environment, because that is linked to real estate in the economy as well, and put a little bit of shock on his face but what has been done since then.

08:47:17 Because I feel very frustrated with the fact that I choose chose to pursue a wa wildlife study studies and conservation ecology degree.

08:47:31 I took an environmental law class, getting very excited to go to places like the DP and see presentations by a lot of individuals that work for and it seemed that the people that work there were very split, and I was very excited because this is what

08:47:47 I want to do. And it seemed like exhausted employees that generally cared about protecting citizens health environmentally and then a group of them that clearly had other intentions for personal profit, which was extremely frustrating as somebody that

08:48:04 wants to pursue this as a career. I also have read endless amounts of articles and everyone is here, heard recently about everyone leaving our state, myself included, I left quite a while as well.

08:48:17 I love my state. I do not want to leave it. I want to work here. But when you do not put environmental justice is social justice because, which is economic justice, they will bring us long term jobs.

08:48:37 It's frustrating to see my workforce not get paid, and respected for the work we do.

08:48:40 So, and and killing our, our constituents and the citizens that vote you in so please understand the disrespect you have, if you vote this through. please do not vote this through.

08:48:54 Thank you.

08:48:56 Thank you so much for your comments.

08:48:59 Our next speaker is autumn crow.

08:49:04 Hi, I'm autumn Pro, I'm the staff scientist for West Virginia rivers coalition.

08:49:10 And I'm adamantly opposed to age, 2598.

08:49:15 This bill would endanger drinking water supplies of 27 counties and a state that only has 55 counties that's endangering the drinking water supply for half of our state.

08:49:28 These tanks contain harmful chemicals that are extremely dangerous to public health.

08:49:34 HB 2598 would eliminate regulations for approximately 1000 tanks that under this regulation under the above ground storage tank Act has been cited by dp almost 2000 times.

08:49:52 So, those violations would have gone undetected had the above ground storage tank act but not been in place, exempting these tanks from the above ground storage tank that would basically eliminate the protections for the drinking water.

08:50:11 When these tanks fail. We've seen what happens, we've all talked about today, the, the chemical spill that happened in Charleston and that's why the above ground storage tank act was in place in the first place, and should remain in place to protect drinking

08:50:28 water and to protect public health.

08:50:31 It's a lot more costly to remove the contaminants, once they enter the environment once they're in the soil and once they're in the water once they're in their groundwater.

08:50:45 It's a lot more expensive for companies to remove the contaminants than it is for them to do an annual inspection. So I urge our legislators to reject Hb 2598 and protect the citizens of West Virginia, and their drinking water.

08:50:58 Thank you.

08:51:00 Thank you.

08:51:02 We have delegates, Mike Pushkin waiting in the queue, we wanted to do address the group as well.

08:51:10 Thanks. Thanks for allowing me to speak for a few minutes and, and I apologize that I got on late and I apologize, I have to go the judiciary. I've been judiciary at nine o'clock I just wanted to thank everybody for being on and thank the organizers of

08:51:25 this call and apologize that that this is the way we have to do public hearings right now. And that, you know, a piece of legislation that has the capacity you know the has the capacity to negatively affect so many people in West Virginia to pack so

08:51:45 many of the health of of our citizens and our constituents was twice denied public hearing, I mean that is just is completely ridiculous.

08:51:55 I'm not exactly sure what people think they're doing up here who they're who they who they think they're, they represent, obviously it's not the people.

08:52:04 It's largely, no big out of state gas companies.

08:52:09 I'm trying to see both sides of every issue but we're talking about tanks that are within the zone of critical concern to me and it's just, it's ridiculous to roll this part of the above ground storage tank act back to me it's not too much to ask to have

08:52:24 inspections and retaining walls when you're close to public drinking water intakes. So I serve on the committee that is going to be taking this bill up.

08:52:34 I'm not sure exactly when I was told next week and probably either Tuesday or Thursday. I would just ask for your help and contacting. Members of the Committee on Health and Human Resources in the house.

08:52:48 I serve as a minority chair.

08:52:50 So the ranking democratic member on the committee. I know that our folks on the committee have not heard from anybody that's in support of this idea from our side.

08:53:00 Unfortunately, unfortunately we only have six boats out of 25 on the committee. So I'm going to strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote against this that safe drinking water is not a Republican or Democratic issue it's a human issue

08:53:14 everybody needs to live. We want to bring people to West Virginia, we want to make West Virginia a great place to live, work and raise a family, like we so often hear politicians say we got to provide people with basic necessities, like safe drinking

08:53:29 water, and I live here in Charleston. I know what happens when we don't have it, assault, what the events were that led to the passing of the above ground storage tank act they build it went through three major committees in the house of delegates were

08:53:43 passed was properly vetted time. This bill has been rushed through public hearings have been denied.

08:53:49 But I can say that after that chemical spill in 2014, that was the largest mass exodus I've seen from Charleston, West Virginia, and from other parts of this state, we want to bring people to live here.

08:54:01 This is the least we could do, so I'm gonna do my best to try to focus down.

08:54:07 But I need your help and calling my colleagues. Thanks for doing this. I appreciate you all for being here.

08:54:13 Thank you, appreciate you being here. Are you have to rush.

08:54:19 But as we asked if there are other legislators on the call who want to address the group. I know that everybody's probably got meetings coming right up.

08:54:33 Well good Larry row.

08:54:50 Were you surprised them with us. There may not be at their desks, I think delegate Walker may have been on the call earlier to, you can feel free to raise your hand if you come in the room there Yes, hi good row.

08:54:58 Hi, good morning.

08:55:00 I just want to say that this is that we have to call the, the water roll bill we're going to consider the, the dirty water bill but this, This bill is the deadly water bill, it's just amazing.

08:55:16 It's amazing that it's been pushed through so quickly. I really appreciate the speaker sending it off to health.

08:55:23 As Mike pointed out maybe they can do some, some good on it, but it's a terrible bill, you just can't explain why the legislature would want to, to create danger zones right at intake areas in our streams I just it amazes me.

08:55:44 So anyway I appreciate having the hearing I appreciate everybody who's participated it really does matter, and thank you for doing. Thank you, Sam.

08:55:53 Thank you. It's been my honor.

08:55:56 It's my honor. If we find other delegates, feel free to look them in here we want to go back.

08:56:02 We believe that I'm sorry, go ahead. This is Evan handsome. Oh thank you delegate Hansen, go ahead.

08:56:09 I just wanted to also thank everybody for voicing your opinions, we, we had testimony in the Energy Committee from actual scientists, and that testimony was pretty powerful, but unfortunately it didn't change any minds.

08:56:24 So, you know, we need to hear not just from scientists, but from people who are protected, potentially affected so I think delegate Pushkin's advice was the right advice contact members of the health committee and.

08:56:35 See, see if we can stop this bill at any stage along the way. Thanks.

08:56:41 Thank you.

08:56:45 Legislators on the call I'm trying to scan the participants.

08:56:53 If not, we want to circle back to speakers who were not available in the queue.

08:57:00 We believe that perhaps Mark Blumenstein is on the call, you still wish a moment to speak.

08:57:16 Thank you.

08:57:18 We're getting some great comments in the chat there's will be shared with the media and the release later this afternoon.

08:57:25 I want to remind folks that this has been an open process, people who were either in favor or opposed to this piece of legislation were welcome on the call, as they would have been a real legislative public hearing.

08:57:42 And we appreciate the opportunity for

08:57:48 different to us by the planners to do this. We also want to open the call to questions from the media. If they may be on the call.

08:58:08 JOHN we will summarize the comments and the chat and release something to the media later today.

08:58:16 Let me call finally on Angie Rosser to let people know about contacting the proper committee members, how to find those there was a question in the chat about somebody said, Jonathan said, members of the committee, we're not hearing from their constituents,

08:58:38 how they make that happen.

08:58:41 Thanks.

08:58:43 Kathleen maybe I'm not able to post in the chat to everyone but we have a, an action alert landing page setup that where you can enter your name and address and it automatically will help you send a message to your elected delegate.

08:58:59 So we encourage you to take that action.

08:59:03 Maybe Hannah I don't know if you can post a link to where people can find on the legislative website the members of the House Health and Human Resources Committee that list you can click on their name and find their email and phone number, phone calls

08:59:21 as you heard from delegate Pushkin are really important that they here not just email to get a lot of email but they hear, they get calls directly we know this makes a difference.

08:59:32 And just want to remind you that we have a water bill on the another water bill that the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee Chairman capital has decided to hold a to host a virtual public hearing Monday morning.

08:59:51 At 9am, we are still awaiting details on how the public can access that and speak of that as soon as we get that we will be sure to share that out with you as part of our wallet from today's hearing.

09:00:05 So thanks again for everyone coming out today.

09:00:08 This is what we hoped for and expected and reinforce to our legislators that the public is watching that we're concerned about our water, and we urge them to do the right thing for the interest of all West Virginians not just a few tank owners.

09:00:28 So thanks again Sam and all the groups who helped post this today and we'll hopefully see you all again. Monday morning, let's make, let's just like have regular coffee together public hearings, I guess.

09:00:41 Thank you all for for standing up for water.

09:00:45 Thank you. And for those of you who might be on a mobile device if you need to contact the legislature.

09:00:51 We really do have a very excellent website you can do that through www.wvlegislature.gov Govt.

09:01:01 And you can navigate to find members of the House or Senate and the committee's and phone numbers and email addresses and all of those things.

09:01:10 So I want to thank you all for being part of this first people's public hearing. Want to thank the organizers and wish you all a wonderful day.

09:01:24 Thank you very much.