



MIKE DEWINE

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June 2, 2011

Ohio House of Representative
Teresa Fedor, Representative
Dennis Murray, Representative
Mark Okey, Representative
77 South High Street, 10th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Representatives Fedor, Murray and Okey:

I am in receipt of your letter dated April 19, 2011 requesting that my office investigate a document found in the Yellow Springs area relating to oil and gas leasing activities. Upon receipt of this request I instructed one of my investigators to go to Yellow Springs to look into this matter.

My investigator made several trips to the Yellow Springs area and talked to a dozen local landowners and law enforcement personnel. One of my attorneys interviewed employees and an agent of the only oil and gas exploration company that appears to be operating in the Yellow Springs area. These efforts have produced no evidence as to who authored this document and whether the document was used in conjunction with oil and gas leasing in the Yellow Springs area. Had a link been established with the document, the company and the lease activity, my office would have continued an investigation into whether or not fraudulent activity had occurred.

The presence of Marcellus and Utica Shale beneath our state would indicate that oil and gas leasing issues will continue to arise. In an effort to keep Ohio landowners and consumers informed, my office is working on a web page which will offer tips to the landowner on what to be mindful of in the leasing process.

Finally, as you may be aware some oil and gas leases are subject to registration as securities under Ohio law. Land agents may also be subject to registration. Whether registration is required for a lease or a land agent is very fact specific and there are many exemptions which come into play. My staff recently met with the Ohio Department of Commerce about the document found in Yellow Springs. The Division of Securities of that Department has indicated that they will look into whether any issues relating to unregistered activity are presented in this case.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General

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