



## COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

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### **Ohio and Colorado Voters Adopt Community Bills of Rights** *Lafayette, Colorado is first in the state to do so* *Pro-Fracking interests outspend community rights efforts by wide margins.*

#### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(North Middleton Township, PA, November 6, 2013)

On Election Day, voters in an Ohio and a Colorado community enacted Community Bills of Rights to secure the right to local self-government and to protect the right to clean air, pure water, and the rights of ecosystems to exist and flourish. By a margin of 70.56%, voters in Oberlin, OH, approved their citizen-initiated ordinance. In Lafayette, CO, where citizens petitioned to amend their city home rule charter, the winning margin was 60.16%.

Prior to the election, Jon Hydeman, an employee of Halliburton, supported by an oil and gas industry law firm, filed a complaint with the Boulder County Board of Elections claiming that state law required the petitions for the proposed amendment include a summary of the measure. The petitions included the entirety of the amendment language. City Clerk Susan Koster threw out the petition challenge, agreeing with the citizens' group East Boulder County United and declaring "As a home rule city, Lafayette operates under a citizen adopted charter. In the case of this protest, the petition submitted to amend the City's Charter complied with the Colorado Home Rule Act."

Despite the Colorado Oil and Gas Association dumping \$66,974 into local media, the citizens of Lafayette overwhelmingly supported the charter amendment.

Similar attempts to prevent voters from considering Community Bills of Rights were made by pro-fracking interests in Bowling Green and Youngstown, OH. While the citizens groups prevailed over those pre-election challenges, they were not so fortunate on Election Day.

Amid City Council and Chamber of Commerce propaganda characterizing the proposed Bowling Green charter amendment as a jobs killer and a measure guaranteed to hike residential energy costs by more than 80%, the city also enacted an ordinance banning fracking as a means to dissuade voters from voting for the charter amendment. But the ordinance is subject to being rescinded by Council once the election was over. These maneuvers succeeded in scaring voters away from a measure already enacted in Broadview Heights and Mansfield, OH, where none of the dire predictions of the Bowling Green elite have occurred.

In Youngstown, where the local group, The Community Bill of Rights Committee, spent \$693 compared to amendment opponents, who spent \$74,449, election results showed a small improvement from their attempt in May of this year. Lynn Anderson, a member of the Community Bill of Rights Committee, commented, “We’re going again. This will not stop. We have to save our lives, our air and our water. We’ll keep putting it on the ballot until it passes.”

Expect to see more communities take a stand for their rights, against the servants of wealth and corporate privilege. The struggle for [Community Rights](#) continues.