



DEFENDING RIGHTS & DISSENT

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION

SB 250

SUBMITTED BY

DEFENDING RIGHTS & DISSENT

November 12, 2018

Defending Rights & Dissent is a national civil liberties organization that works to fulfil the promise of the Bill of Rights for everyone. We place special emphasis on protecting the right to engage in political expression. We are opposed to SB 250 and the proposed substitute. We urge you to reject it.

There are already laws on the books that deal with actual threats to critical infrastructure rendering this bill entirely unnecessary. Singling out critical infrastructure for heightened protections is rooted in animus for pipeline protesters. Passing laws rooted in animus towards disfavored political views has an inherently chilling effect on speech. Given the deleterious effect SB 250 will have on political freedom, it should be opposed.

This bill goes further than passing unnecessary provisions. It creates vicarious liability for organizations who “compensate” individuals who violate this statute or even pay their fine. This is clearly meant to intimidate civil society groups who might otherwise support anti-pipeline protests.

This bill is entirely unnecessary and does nothing to protect critical infrastructure. It is rooted in animus towards a particular political view. It will chill speech broadly and stifle political organizing. We urge you to reject it.

We would be pleased to elaborate on our stance, or provide additional information. Please contact Chip Gibbons, Legislative and Policy Counsel, at Chip@rightsanddissent.org or 202-552-7408