



To: Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
From: Colorado Local Elected Officials
Re: Rulemakings
Date: April 28, 2020

Dear Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commissioners and Staff,

As elected officials representing residents from across the entire state of Colorado, we write in support of the work being done at the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, and to encourage the Commission to continue its rulemaking efforts to develop real, meaningful regulations that protect all Coloradans, the air we breathe, and the environment in which we live and recreate. We understand that there are two overlapping and related external factors impacting the work of the Commission and staff: the COVID19 pandemic, and the collapse of the global oil and gas futures market, but we ask that as the rulemaking process moves forward, the voices of all Coloradans across the state continue to be heard.

Our primary concern is the perception of a divide between the needs of rural and urban communities across the state. Every Coloradan deserves to be able to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live, work, and recreate in a safe, healthy environment. SB181 expressly grants local governments the power to regulate oil and gas activity above and beyond the level of the state government. Contrary to arguments made elsewhere, this is an expansion of our authority as local elected officials, not a limitation. When paired with robust statewide rules from the COGCC, this will allow each and every local government in the state to adapt to the unique circumstances of our jurisdictions and truly protect our residents. The strong statewide floor we request here will also help local governments deal with the impacts of oil and gas operations in close proximity to but outside their jurisdiction.

The oil and gas industry has always been a volatile source of both revenue and jobs. According to staff reports, applications and approvals for new wells at the COGCC are down significantly from last year. Although SB181 recently celebrated its first birthday, virtually none of the required rulemakings have been completed. The ongoing crash of oil and gas markets is being caused by over production and greatly decreased demand as the result of the COVID19 crisis, not Colorado's nascent regulatory overhaul.

Pausing rulemaking efforts in Colorado cannot fix the structural decline of the oil and gas markets, nor would it address the burden placed on state, county, and municipal governments to clean up orphaned wells and locations left behind by distressed operators. Instead, such a delay would only continue to subject Coloradans across the state to more harmful air pollutants in the middle of a respiratory pandemic. This is not the solution. While we as elected officials from across the state are certainly feeling the impact of the COVID19 crisis on our capacity, we recognize that the work being done at the COGCC is vital to protecting our residents. The

COGCC needs to develop regulations for an industry experiencing massive market volatility, not delay the development and implementation of rules to protect the health and safety of our constituents.

Some argue that since air quality on the Front Range is worse than other regions of the State, those other regions should be exempted from regulations until their air quality is also failing. We do not believe that this argument is compelling, or appropriately protective of our residents' health and safety. Other issues in this proposed rulemaking beyond air quality, such as ground and surface water protections, protective setbacks, and cumulative impact assessments also require statewide application. Even with the expanded authority granted to local governments, robust statewide rules are essential. Residents in southern, western and eastern Colorado deserve the same protection and consideration as residents living on the Front Range.

This is the time to be proactive. What we need is a commitment to this process, strong rules, and statewide application. This is especially true as the Trump Administration works to undo decades of environmental regulations across the board, and as the BLM continues to offer more and more Colorado lands up for oil and gas leasing. These federal policies are inconsistent with Colorado's goals for public health, the environment, and our climate, and leaves Coloradans more reliant on state regulations than ever before. It is therefore vital that we as a state affirm our commitment to the goal of protecting our residents in as timely a fashion as possible.

Sincerely,

County Commissioner Eva Henry, Adams County, Colorado
County Commissioner Emma Pinter, Adams County, Colorado
City Councilor Skippy Mesirow, City of Aspen, Colorado
City Councilor Ann Mullins, City of Aspen, Colorado
City Councilor Rachael Richards, City of Aspen, Colorado
City Councilor Alison Coombs, City of Aurora, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem Nicole Johnston, City of Aurora, Colorado
City Councilor Angela Lawson, City of Aurora, Colorado
City Councilor Juan Marcano, City of Aurora, Colorado
County Commissioner Deb Gardner, Boulder County, Colorado
County Commissioner Elise Jones, Boulder County, Colorado
County Commissioner Matt Jones, Boulder County, Colorado
City Councilor Aaron Brockett, City of Boulder, Colorado
Mayor Sam Weaver, City of Boulder, Colorado
City Councilor Laurie Anderson, City of Broomfield, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem Guyleen Castriotta, City of Broomfield, Colorado
City Councilor Heid Henkel, City of Broomfield, Colorado
City Councilor Jean Lim, City of Broomfield, Colorado
City Councilor Deven Shaff, City of Broomfield, Colorado
Town Trustee Luis Yllanes, Town of Carbondale, Colorado
County Commissioner George Marlin, Clear Creek County, Colorado
County Commissioner Randy Wheelock, Clear Creek County, Colorado
City Councilor Susan Noble, City of Commerce City, Colorado

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City Councilor Robin Kneich, City of Denver, Colorado
City Councilor Amanda Sawyer, City of Denver, Colorado
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City Councilor Barbara Noseworthy, City of Durango, Colorado
Former City Councilor Dick White, City of Durango, Colorado
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County Commissioner Kathy Jeanne McQueeney, Eagle County, Colorado
County Commissioner Matt Scherr, Eagle County, Colorado
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Town Councilor, Jessica Burley, Town of Frisco, Colorado
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County Commissioner Gail Watson, Gilpin County, Colorado
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County Commissioner Gwen Lachelt, La Plata County, Colorado
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Former Mayor Christine Berg, City of Lafayette, Colorado
City Councilor Stephanie Walton, City of Lafayette, Colorado
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City Councilor Katherine Goff, City of Northglenn, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem Jenny Willford, City of Northglenn, Colorado
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County Commissioner George Newman, Pitkin County, Colorado
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County Commissioner Beth Melton, Routt County, Colorado
County Commissioner Pete McKay, San Juan County, Colorado
County Commissioner Hilary Cooper, San Miguel County, Colorado
County Commissioner Kris Holstrom, San Miguel County, Colorado
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County Commissioner Karn Stiegelmeier, Summit County, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem Todd Brown, Town of Telluride, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem Kim Langmaid, Town of Vail, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem Anita Seitz, City of Westminster, Colorado
City Councilor Jon Voelz, City of Westminster, Colorado
Senator Faith Winter, State Senate District 24, Colorado