



To: Air Quality Control Commission  
From: Colorado Local Elected Officials  
Re: Rulemakings

Date: June 18, 2020

Dear Air Quality Control Commissioners and Staff,

As elected officials representing residents from across the entire state of Colorado, we write in support of the work being done by the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) 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 Covid-19 pandemic and the collapse of the global oil and gas futures market. However, 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 as well as live, work, and recreate in a safe, healthy environment. SB19-181 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. Local protections paired with robust statewide rules from the AQCC 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. The ongoing crash of oil and gas markets is caused by over production and greatly decreased demand as the result of the Covid-19 crisis, not Colorado's nascent regulatory overhaul. We commend the state for the work it has already accomplished on SB181.

Challenging or attempting to delay 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. Obstructing the rulemaking process would only subject Coloradans across the state to more harmful air pollutants in the middle of a respiratory pandemic. In fact, the Center for Disease Control has found that those with serious underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk for more severe effects of Covid-19.

According to the Air Pollution Control Division, oil and gas operations are the leading, human-caused source of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). That pollution can create ozone or smog, which can worsen respiratory diseases such as asthma and emphysema and cause heart disease. Moreover, climate change means hotter, longer summers that worsen ozone pollution. And given the fact that oil and gas is the largest industrial source of methane emissions in Colorado and a powerful climate change pollutant, it is critical that the AQCC continue to make progress in cutting both VOCs and methane.

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 AQCC is vital to protecting our public health and climate. Moreover, we believe that the state's rulemakings are in fact a key tool to our economic recovery post-pandemic. The AQCC 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.

According to the American Lung Association, several counties along the West Slope see high ozone days, including La Plata County, which has received a failing grade three years in a row for ozone pollution. Likewise, many Front Range counties have received poor grades for air quality. All Coloradans deserve the same protection and consideration, whether they live in eastern, central or western Colorado.

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. Recently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued guidance that could allow oil and gas operators to skirt federal regulations. And the BLM continues to offer more and more Colorado lands up for oil and gas leasing without proper safeguards to protect our air, water, climate and communities. 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  
City Councilor Skippy Mesirov, City of Aspen, Colorado  
City Councilor Ann Mullins, City of Aspen, Colorado  
City Councilor Rachael Richards, City of Aspen, Colorado  
City Councilor Juan Marcano, City of Aurora, Colorado  
Mayor Sarah Smith Hymes, Town of Avon, Colorado  
County Commissioner Deb Gardner, 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

City Councilor Heidi Henkel, City of Broomfield, Colorado  
City Councilor Deven Shaff, City of Broomfield, Colorado  
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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  
City Council President Jolon Clark, City of Denver, Colorado  
City Councilor Robin Kneich, City of Denver, Colorado  
City Councilor Amanda Sawyer, City of Denver, Colorado  
City Councilor Barbara Noseworthy, City of Durango, Colorado  
Former Mayor & City Councilor Dick White, City of Durango, Colorado  
County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry, Eagle County, Colorado  
County Commissioner Matt Scherr, Eagle County, Colorado  
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City Councilor Michal Rosenoer, City of Edgewater, Colorado  
Town Trustee Sara Loflin, Town of Erie, Colorado  
Town Trustee Christiaan Van Woudenberg, Town of Erie, Colorado  
Town Councilor, Jessica Burley, Town of Frisco, Colorado  
County Commissioner Ron Engels, Gilpin County, Colorado  
County Commissioner Linda Isenhardt, Gilpin County, Colorado  
County Commissioner Gail Watson, Gilpin County, Colorado  
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City Councilor Paula Stepp, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado  
City Councilor JJ Trout, City of Golden, Colorado  
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City Councilor Stephanie Walton, City of Lafayette, Colorado  
County Commissioner John Kefalas, Larimer County, Colorado  
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Town Councilor Eric Gotthelf, Town of Minturn, Colorado  
Mayor John Widerman, Town of Minturn, Colorado  
Town Trustee Alan Apt, Town of Nederland, Colorado  
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City Councilor Julie Mullica, City of Northglenn, Colorado  
Mayor Pro Tem Jenny Willford, City of Northglenn, Colorado  
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County Commissioner Greg Poschman, Pitkin County, Colorado  
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Mayor P.T. Wood, City of Salida, Colorado  
County Commissioner Hilary Cooper, San Miguel County, Colorado  
County Commissioner Kris Holstrom, San Miguel County, Colorado  
County Commissioner Lance Waring, San Miguel County, Colorado  
County Commissioner Karn Stiegelmeier, Summit County, Colorado  
Mayor Pro Tem Todd Brown, Town of Telluride, Colorado

Mayor DeLanie Young, 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