

3/22/17

Colorado State Legislature  
Attn: Representative Mike Foote  
Re: HB17-1256

Dear Representative Foote:

As the parent of two school-aged children, a climate activist, and a deeply concerned citizen, I am writing to urge you to support HB17-1256, the Oil & Gas Facilities Distance From School Property bill.

Oil and gas have historically played a critical role in energy production and economic development in the United States, and in Colorado in particular. In recent years, this production has accelerated due to the expanded prevalence of natural gas from hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"). Colorado sits atop the Niobara oil shale deposit, making it a rich source of this inexpensive fossil fuel.

However, there is mounting evidence that, while cleaner burning and cheaper than coal, natural gas production results in a number of detrimental environmental and human health impacts:

Consider:

- Fracking releases what is known as "fugitive emissions" of methane, a potent greenhouse gas more than 20 times more damaging to the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.<sup>1</sup>
- The injection of fracking wastewater into drilled wells is responsible for man-made earthquakes occurring in Ohio, Oklahoma, and right here in Colorado.<sup>2</sup>
- The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), one of the most highly respected environmental policy and research organizations, reports that fracking results in nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds released during the drilling process. These greenhouse gases form ground-level ozone that can cause "respiratory and cardiovascular side effects including coughs, shortness of breath, airway and lung inflammation, decreased lung function, worsening of asthma and other respiratory diseases, cardiac arrhythmia, increased risk of heart disease, heart attack, stroke, increased hospital admissions and premature mortality."<sup>3</sup>
- The NRDC goes on to state that: "Those living or working closest to wells are at the highest risk. In addition to the aforementioned health threats, they can also be exposed to diesel particulate matter and other toxics, including carcinogens. As a result, they are also at risk for eye, nose, and throat irritation, brain and nervous system problems including headaches, lightheadedness and disorientation, blood and bone marrow damage leading to anemia and immunological problems, reproductive system effects, birth defects and harm to the developing fetus, and cancer."

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fracking-would-emit-methane/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/southern-colorado/moderate-earthquake-hits-southern-colorado-45-magnitude-quake-hit-near-trinidad>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/media/2014/141216>

We have a duty to protect our children. By siting oil and gas wells near schools, we are exposing one of the most vulnerable of our human populations—and the priceless, precious gifts of our hearts—to innumerable threats to their health and well-being. Frankly, siting these projects even 1000 feet from school property lines is not far enough away. Our children should not have to bear the brunt of the blind greed of the fossil fuel industry.

Your support for this important, clarifying bill is essential. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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