

TESTIMONY:

I am writing my testimony today to provide and express my strong support for Rep. Joann Ginal's bill to conduct a long-term assessment of health impacts of oil and gas development along Colorado's Front Range.

My extensive research with communities and residents living near oil and gas operations has shown that the rapid proliferation and wide scale of new oil and gas development in Colorado has led to patterned health concerns across the state, as well as concerns over changes to daily quality of life. Initial research in Colorado (McKenzie et al 2014, Witter et al 2011), finds that residents may have elevated rates of some health impacts - like respiratory effects and birth defects in their children - if they live within 1,000 feet of an oil or gas well pad. Further, in my interviews with community activists like Erie Rising I have found that people have a multitude of under-addressed or contested health outcomes. Citizens from Erie Rising, as well as Citizens for a Healthy Fort Collins, report experiencing neurological abnormalities (like tremors and seizures), trouble breathing and shortness of breath, headaches, nosebleeds, and other health outcomes that they connect with oil and gas operations and especially the hydraulic fracturing process. Most importantly, they also report hearing about similar health outcomes from many other individuals in communities like Erie and Fort Collins as they canvass neighborhoods and table at public forums.

Even with the contested nature of these health effects, my research has substantiated significant diminished quality of life in communities near unconventional oil and gas operations. People living near unconventional oil and gas operations have reported disturbed sleep patterns, excessive noise and light pollution near their homes, excessive and chronic stress, shifts in local landscapes and place attachment, tension with neighbors and community members, and a fundamental shift in daily life. All of these stressors and disturbances (and many others I have not listed) combine to significantly diminish people's quality of life when they live near unconventional oil and gas facilities. Long-term stress and diminished quality of life can then manifest as psychosocial and biophysical health abnormalities.

Outside Colorado, I have also conducted extensive research in quality of life impacts in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region and have found similar negative health and psychosocial health outcomes among residents in those communities.

I am happy to provide further and more specific testimony if it would be of use.

Sincerely,

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