

SB19-181 - Protect Public Welfare Oil and Gas Operations

Tuesday March 5th, 2019

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TESTIMONY

The Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce has been in business in Colorado for 152 years. We represent 3000 members and their 300,000 employees. Key to our success has been our commitment and discipline to develop public policy and economic strategies that serve our diverse membership and support the work of our public and non-profit partners.

We have long engaged in discussions about regulation of energy production - for decades in fact. And we recognize and respect the differing views engaged in these conversations. Throughout our history, we have opposed policy based on extreme views or fear. Rather, we have favored policy based on data and facts.

We displayed this commitment as recently as last November's election. The Chamber opposed Amendment 74. While we understood the concerns and fears that prompted that proposed policy, we also analyzed facts and data that indicated it wasn't good policy for Colorado. And voters agreed with us. On that same ballot, we also opposed Prop 112, because facts again outweighed fear and we recognized it wasn't good policy for our state. Voters also opposed that approach. 55 percent of Coloradans sent the message that mandated increased setbacks aren't the answer in our state. We are a state of compromise and conversation and we find Coloradans don't go for policies counter to those values.

S.B. 181 does the same thing as both of those policies - it is rooted in fear rather than fact. It wasn't developed by people listening to each other and solving problems, as much of our state's oil and gas regulations to date have been. Instead it considers one set of views and creates policy based on those. Further, the process for engaging Coloradans in a policy discussion regarding S.B. 181 could be considered even more egregious than even the ballot issues because the bill, which contains complex and comprehensive changes to laws that have made us a national model for oil and gas development, provides less than two working days for stakeholders to review it.

And, a two-minute testimony can't be construed as a meaningful way to engage stakeholders. We know that you have the ability to act without considering any input from those who might disagree with you or have a different point of view. But we would submit that the greatest examples of leadership we've seen are those that took moments just like this — and used them to bring people together serving as conveners and problem solvers. We also won't argue that we alone can draft the right policy—we are expressing our commitment to work with you and other stakeholders to ensure we do just that. Let's do this the right way – working together.