



An Alliance for Community Action

4/23/18

Madame Chair and Members of the House Health, Insurance, & Environment Committee,

We are writing you today to ask for your support of House Bill 1352, the School Perimeter Clarification Bill. This is a commonsense bill that would ensure that the current 1,000 foot setback requirement from schools is consistently and uniformly applied across the state to protect students while they are on school grounds.

Currently, this measurement is calculated from the school building, not the school property line, leaving outdoor areas such as playgrounds, tracks, parking lots, and modular classrooms vulnerable to the siting of oil and gas facilities much closer to places where kids play, recreate, and generally spend time while on school grounds. This bill would ensure the 1,000 foot setback is measured from the school property lines and includes these outside areas.

It is not our goal to point fingers at any one operator. Instead we are highlighting is a growing trend across the state of oil and gas facilities being located too close to schools as residential growth and oil and gas development collide. It is our stance that oil and gas production must be conducted in a responsible and safe manner – at least 1000 ft from ALL school facilities where students are present.

Western Colorado Congress and our local affiliate group in Garfield County, the Grand Valley Citizens' Alliance support this bill on behalf our members- who include concerned parents and landowners in Parachute where once Ursa Resources proposed the development of 22 wells within 600 feet of the Grand Valley High School building. This site was technically following state rules but was much closer to other school facilities, such as within 300 feet of the senior parking lot. Accidents, violations and fires happen during the production of O&G, making it especially dangerous within the residential neighborhoods. When a drilling pad is too close to schools it puts students at risk.

At the time Ursa was looking at the site in Garfield County next to Parachute high school, the company even admitted their proposal was not "the absolute best" location. This was of course concerning to parents and landowners in the area who objected to this project. The proposal was not only too close to the school, it broke setback regulations for proximity to homes, placing the pad within 450 feet of the nearest homeowner's front door. Thankfully, Ursa backed off this proposal.

HB 1352 is a concise and commonsense bill that will fix an oversight in current setback rules within Colorado. It will make sure that the 1,000 foot buffer, as decided in the 2013 setback

Western Colorado Congress is a network including these local affiliates:

Grand Valley Citizens Alliance • Garfield County
Ridgway-Ouray Community Council • Ouray County

Uncompahgre Valley Association • Montrose County
Western Colorado Congress of Mesa County

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rulemaking, is protecting students no matter where they are on school grounds, giving them more protection from air pollution and accidents at oil and gas facilities.

HB 1352 will also ensure that all operators across the state are equally accountable for protecting the health and safety of school children. These rules may not be needed for the majority of operators but clearly are needed for the few who persist in locating these large industrial facilities next to homes and schools.

Western Colorado Congress is focused on the merits of this bill. We urge you to support this simple and reasonable bill to better protect our school kids, both on the Front Range and the Western Slope.

Thank you. Please let us know if you have any other questions.

Sincerely,

Steve Allerton
President (and retired teacher)
Western Colorado Congress

Dave Devanney
Chairman
Battlement Concerned Citizens

Leslie Robinson
Chair
Grand Valley Citizens Alliance