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March 21, 2019

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado
136 State Capital Building
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

As you begin your administration, we must continue to stand together to hold Colorado industry to the highest standards in protecting the health and safety of our constituents.

Since 2000, the number of active oil and gas wells in Colorado has almost tripled, from 22,000 to 60,000. The resources extracted are important economic drivers, with natural gas playing an especially important role in providing a transition from a coal-based electricity system to one based on zero-carbon resources. That said, I believe, as I know you do, that energy development must not come at the expense of the health and wellbeing of our communities.

I appreciate the fresh perspective your administration brings to regulating the industry and your commitment to ensuring that oil and gas operations in Colorado are the cleanest in the nation. At the same time, it is important that these operations continue to operate in accordance with existing state and federal laws. With this in mind, I write today to express my concern regarding allegations that several oil and gas companies are routinely violating federal law by drilling in Colorado without first obtaining the required Clean Air Act permits. On February 19, the environmental group WildEarth Guardians put seven oil and gas companies on notice that the group intends to file suit over Clean Air Act violations at hydrofracturing facilities located along Colorado's Front Range, with potential violations totaling more than \$1.3 billion in penalties. WildEarth Guardians claims to have uncovered numerous examples of companies constructing wells and beginning production months before even applying for valid permits.

These allegations are of great concern to me, as across our state, and especially in the First District and other Front Range communities, ground-level ozone pollution continues to pose health and safety risks to our families and neighbors, with the oil and gas industry being among the largest pollution sources.

Based on discussions between my staff, members of your office, and representatives of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, I understand that there are several complex technical and legal questions regarding WildEarth Guardian's allegations. I further understand that the state is closely looking at its longstanding permitting practices to ensure that there is no doubt that Colorado's permitting program meets all the requirements of federal law. I urge Colorado to continue to investigate these claims and stop any violations if they are indeed occurring.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if we can be of any assistance in this matter. I look forward to continuing to our work together in protecting public health and wellbeing.

Sincerely,



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress