

# Agency: Measure would put most of state off-limits to wells

**Dan Elliott, Associated Press, 5-27-16**

DENVER --A proposal to require new oil and gas wells to be at least 2,500 feet from homes and schools in Colorado would leave 90 percent of the state off-limits to future drilling, regulators said Friday.

The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission released a report (<http://tinyurl.com/ju4be2j>) on the impact of a proposed constitutional amendment that backers hope to put on the November ballot.

The report said that in the state's top five oil and gas counties, 95 percent of the land area would off-limits to new wells and other energy facilities. Those counties are Garfield, La Plata, Las Animas, Rio Blanco and Weld.

A group called Yes for Health and Safety over Fracking is gathering petition signatures for the measure, known as Initiative 78 (<http://tinyurl.com/zxjgejd>). It isn't known yet whether it will be on the ballot.

A spokeswoman for the group didn't immediately return a call.

The proximity of oil and gas development to residential neighborhoods is a contentious issue in Colorado. The Denver-Julesburg Basin, described by the American Petroleum Institute as one of the richest natural gas fields in the nation, overlaps the northern Denver suburbs and surrounds Greeley.

Drilling rigs, storage tanks and active wells sometimes stand within a few hundred feet of homes. That prompts frequent complaints from residents about noise, odors and traffic. Others worry about health and safety issues.

Industry groups said the commission's report shows the proposed constitutional amendment would do serious damage.

"This setback measure would devastate Colorado's economy, put thousands of people out of work and allow the government to take private property from Coloradans without compensation," said Karen Crummy, a spokeswoman for Protecting Colorado's Environment, Economy, and Energy Independence.

The report was compiled at the request of Oil and Gas Conservation Commission member Tommy E. Holton, mayor of the Weld County town of Fort Lupton. Fort Lupton is in the Denver-Julesburg Basin.