

Comments to the COGCC
Elise Jones, Boulder County Commissioner – April 30, 2018

Good morning. My name is Elise Jones and I'm a Boulder County Commissioner. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

The COGCC, in public statements and in legal proceedings, has repeatedly attempted to reassure Colorado citizens that it listens to local concerns when considering the location and development of new oil and gas wells. Indeed, COGCC rules indicate that the Commission will provide local public forums in certain instances and that local governments can intervene in proceedings "as a matter of right."

However, Boulder County has repeatedly found that its efforts to be heard and to ensure that our citizens are heard have been stifled at every turn. Every request the County has made to more actively involve the public has been denied by the COGCC. What's more, every effort for the County to intervene in a development application proceeding has been met with resistance, and, in several cases, we have been completely denied the ability to participate.

For example, our request for a local public forum involving 8 North's applications to drill 52 wells in Boulder County was denied under an overly strict reading of the rule that did not acknowledge the significant density of development that 8 North is proposing.

Then our protests on the 8 North Drilling & Spacing Unit (DSU) and additional density applications were dismissed because they purportedly didn't state our concerns specifically enough, despite the fact that 8 North did not and would not provide any specifics about its plans that we could respond to.

Then our second protest to one of the 8 North DSUs on a new legal issue was denied for being late. We filed it several months before the hearing date and asked for leave to file, but our request was never answered and the protest was summarily denied.

Up until now, most of these denials have all been handled at the staff or hearing officer level. I want to make sure that the Commission is aware of what is happening. The upshot is that we feel that we've been denied the opportunity to fully present to the COGCC our concerns about threats to public health, safety, and welfare, including the protection of our environment and open space.

Just to be crystal clear, what we're asking for is the opportunity to participate in COGCC proceedings, to have a seat at the table, to be heard.

As you know from my repeated appearances before you -- I think this #5 in the last six months -- my constituents are very concerned about and opposed to the proposals pending in Boulder County for intensive drilling near homes and on open space purchased with taxpayer dollars.

If we continue to be denied the opportunity to present these concerns to you, it sends the message to citizens and local governments across the state that the COGCC does not care what communities have to say and is focused only on the voices of industry.