

Larimer County commissioners hold second hearing on oil and gas regulation changes

The commissioners heard around an hour and a half of more public comment

The Larimer County Commissioners held their second public meeting Thursday night for proposed changes to the county's land use code on oil and gas regulations but did not reach a decision by 9 p.m.

The vote was pushed to Thursday evening [after Monday night's session](#) stretched longer than anticipated due to a large influx of public comment.

Discussion around regulation changes to the county's land use code regarding oil and gas has carried on for several months and several rounds of public input. Some of the proposed regulations include restriction of where oil and gas operations can occur, different types of monitoring and more.

More information on the oil and gas regulation changes can be found at larimer.org. Thursday night's meeting kicked off with another roughly hour and a half of public comment from those who were unable to speak during Monday's hearing.

Those in opposition returned to say that the regulations would be a devastating difficulty to the oil and gas industry and bring an end to many jobs throughout the county.

Trisha Fanning, director of the Small Operators Society, said during the hearing that the new board of commissioners have had their focus "shifted" away from hearing both sides. She claimed that the oil and gas industry is one of the safest in the world and that while the commissioners have claimed they have a focus on providing good paying jobs, they are alienating an industry that she says provides just that.

"It seems as though the industry that provides those career avenues is not wanted because of the politics surrounding it," she said.

Carrie Hackenberger, associate director for the American Petroleum Institute Colorado, said that while they are thankful they have been able to speak multiple times, they believe parts of the regulations are "duplicative to (Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission) regulations and could raise state and federal preemption issues as a result."

Several residents came out to share personal stories as well, including 15-year resident Nadine Jung who's husband spent 30 years in the industry. She said several months after he died, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and without the oil and gas industry and the support it provided, "I would not be here today."

Those in favor of the changes, which are stricter than the current rules, returned to urge the commissioners to pass the regulations to protect the safety and health of those in the county as well as the planet itself.

Rep. Andrew Boesenecker, from the 53rd District in the Colorado House of Representatives, spoke on behalf of several other local government officials in support of the regulations to keep people safe in the county.

Boesenecker said it also is important to have new facilities at least 2,500 feet away from residents and thanked the commissioners for placing “public health, safety and welfare at the forefront of these regulations.”

Patricia Nelson, a Greeley resident who works in Fort Collins, said that her story is a cautionary tale, as she lived away from Colorado for many years and came back to a great increase in wells across several counties, including one well near her son’s school that ended up leaking.

“Eventually you are going to run out of oil or you are going to run out of places to drill,” she said. “That is what is happening in Weld County.”

Charles Kopp, a Fort Collins resident, asked for stricter regulations throughout the county, particularly on fracking practices, which he said would exacerbate already poor air quality.

He also said that, based on his research, oil and gas was one of the lowest employers throughout the county, standing far behind breweries in the area.

“The fact is this county is a thriving county without oil and gas,” he said

The Larimer County Commissioners were still taking information on the proposed changes at 9 p.m. Thursday.