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County commissioners approve alternative oil and gas review process

New MOU and Administrative Review require more stringent standards than state law

Littleton, Colo. – The Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners approved on April 30 an alternative approval process to address local land-use concerns and potential impacts from oil and gas operations in unincorporated Arapahoe County. This process will supplement state regulations for oil and gas drilling and production, which are overseen by the [Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission](#).

The Board approved a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) and Administrative Use by Special Review Process](#) that together will serve as an alternative to the County's conventional Use by Special Review Process. Both will address local impacts from oil and gas operations, such as light pollution, erosion, noxious weeds, traffic conflicts with school buses, or damage to County infrastructure from heavy equipment on roadways.

“County staff have worked closely with industry experts, citizens and regulatory officials for more than a year to outline oil and gas best practices that do not duplicate state and federal regulations,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner and board chairman Rod Bockenfeld. “The outcome is an MOU and administrative process that will ensure stronger protections for public health, the environment and County infrastructure from oil and gas operations in unincorporated areas.”

The Memorandum of Understanding would serve as a contract between the County and any willing oil and gas operator. The document calls for increased County oversight of operations and more stringent standards than state regulations, such as requiring County inspection of oil and gas operations, encouraging closed-loop systems, additional baseline water quality sampling and simultaneous spill reporting to the County when spills are reported to COGCC.

If a company signs on to the MOU, it will then be able to undergo the newly-approved Administrative Use by Special Review Process, which will be shorter and less costly than the conventional Use by Special Review Process and will not require a public hearing. The Administrative Use by Special Review Process was adopted as Section 12-1900 of the County's Land Development Code.

At its March 5 public meeting, the County's Planning Commission, which is comprised of citizens of unincorporated Arapahoe County, recommended approval of the Administrative Use of Special Review Process to the Board.

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The Board has approved 17 conventional Use by Special Review applications for oil and gas operations since 2012.

For more information on the County's regulatory process for oil and gas, please visit www.arapahoe.gov or call Arapahoe County Public Works and Development at 720-874-6500.

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