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Diverse Support for a Pragmatic Statewide Groundwater Testing Program

Denver, CO - A diverse group of stakeholders has issued a fact sheet supporting a new, pragmatic statewide groundwater sampling program. On Wednesday, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) held the first hearing for a proposed statewide baseline groundwater monitoring program.

Colorado has implemented a number of successful basin-specific water testing programs that have built public confidence in industry's ability to protect groundwater in conjunction with oil and gas drilling operations. For example, there is more than ten years of water quality data from southwest Colorado; this data is publicly available and has been analyzed by third parties, demonstrating that extensive oil and gas drilling has been done in harmony with groundwater protection.

"In La Plata County we have been working with the residents of La Plata County since April of 2000. We have a robust water well testing program where over 1,300 water wells have been sampled with over 3,500 total samples including springs," says **Christi Zeller, Executive Director of the La Plata Energy Council**. "We have the data to assure the public that their groundwater is safe and our 3,333 active natural gas development can coexist while protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our community."

The oil and gas industry implemented a statewide voluntary groundwater monitoring program beginning in January of 2012 in which operators who drill over 93% of the wells drilled in Colorado participate. **Colorado's statewide voluntary program is the most comprehensive testing program in the United States. If converted to a mandatory program, it would significantly exceed all other water sampling requirements in the country in both scientific rigor and transparency.**

"We, as landowners and water well owners, understand the need for quality testing and rigor when it comes to our water supply. That's why we support a state-wide program that ensures transparency while being cost-effective," said **Routt County citizen Amy J. Williams** with

Citizens Supporting Property Rights. "The oil and gas industry is our partner and we must work together to make any program effective for all of us."

For example, the current Colorado voluntary program is the only program in the country with post-drilling sampling requirements. This coalition believes that any new rule should build off of these successes without unnecessarily hampering energy development with excessive requirements.

"The oil and gas industry understands that our communities are concerned with groundwater protection. As your Colorado neighbors, so are we. That's why we built a statewide voluntary program and support a new, mandatory program," said **Tisha Schuller, President & CEO, Colorado Oil & Gas Association.** "If adopted as mandatory, the current voluntary program would surpass all other state requirements across the country in both scientific rigor and transparency."

The coalition has added two members: Citizens Supporting Property Rights, a local citizens group in Routt County and West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association. The coalition has also released two fact sheets articulating the real-world effects of increased oil and gas setbacks: "The Reality of Increased Setbacks" and "The Unintended Environmental Consequences of Increased Setbacks."

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For More Information Contact:

Cathy Garcia, Action 22, Inc., (719) 560-9897, cathy@action22.org

Amy J. Williams, Citizens Supporting Property Rights, (970) 846-8601, awilliams@nashjohnson.com

Bonnie Petersen, CLUB 20, (970) 242-3264, bonnie@club20.org

Terry Fankhauser, Colorado Cattlemen's Association, (303) 431-6422, terry@coloradocattle.org

Chad Vorthmann, Colorado Farm Bureau, (303) 749-7509, chad@colofb.com

Doug Flanders, Colorado Oil & Gas Association, (303) 861-0362, doug.flanders@coga.org

Christi Zeller, La Plata Energy Council, (970) 259-1301, czeller@gobrainstorm.net

Neil Ray, National Association of Royalty Owners Rockies Chapter, (303) 237-5475, neilray@comcast.net

Jennifer Finch, Weld County, (970) 336-7203, jfinch@co.weld.co.us

David Ludlam, West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association, (970) 773-2199, d.ludlam@wscoga.org