

**COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION
SIERRA CLUB
WESTERN COLORADO CONGRESS
WESTERN RESOURCE ADVOCATES**

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A Legislative measure originally intended to protect landowners confronted with impending oil and gas drilling on their property still has a chance to become a bill that helps Colorado residents deal with the record energy development occurring in the state.

“House Bill 1185 was intended to provide a fair balance between landowners’ private property rights and reasonable oil and gas development when drilling companies own the mineral rights,” said Elise Jones, executive director of the Colorado Environmental Coalition, a state wide conservation group that supports the rights of landowners. “Unfortunately, it needs improvement.”

With the Colorado Senate scheduled to consider the bill over the next week, landowners and their supporters are asking legislators to modify the bill to strike the balance that was originally intended. The changes include:

1. Oil and gas operators must be specifically required to *minimize the damage* that they cause to private lands so oil and gas drilling doesn’t disrupt the lives and permanently scour the land, contaminate wells and harm livestock.
2. Landowners should be fairly compensated for the lost value of their property when oil and gas wells reduce the value of the home and land that could represent a landowner’s life savings, life and livelihood.
3. It should be clarified that landowners who have a pre-existing lease that does not address the locations of gas wells or compensation for damages will have the ability to negotiate those concerns with the oil and gas operators as part of this legislation. Many landowners have old leases that were written when only one well was permitted for each 640 acres, but now wells can be drilled as close as one every 20 acres, or even one every 10 acres in parts of the state.

"My constituents are pleased that Representative Kathleen Curry and Senator Jim Isgar have brought this important issue to the legislature," said Garfield County Commissioner Tresi Houpt. "With a continued commitment to bringing a balanced bill forward, much can be accomplished to help landowners across the state; this bill will also accomplish increased protection for water sources and the wildlife found on private lands."

“With a few modifications, HB 1185 can be a step forward for landowners and rural communities in Colorado,” affirmed Duke Cox of the Western Colorado Congress. “Otherwise, the legislation doesn’t make sense for private property owners who stand to lose their life savings if their property is destroyed. Representative Curry has worked tirelessly on this bill for two years and it now time for the Senate to help us finish the job.”

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