



COLORADO FARM BUREAU

Promoting and protecting the future of agriculture and rural values.

December 15, 2020

Boulder County Commissioners
Boulder County Courthouse
Third Floor
1325 Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80302

Weld County Commissioners
1150 O Street
P.O. Box 758
Greeley, CO 80631

Dear Boulder and Weld County Commissioners,

On behalf of the 24,000-plus members of the Colorado Farm Bureau, I write to you today regarding new and proposed regulations on energy development in your respective counties.

The Colorado Farm Bureau represents agriculture producers in 45 counties across the state of Colorado. For more than 100 years the organization has served to protect and advance the interests of our state's farmers, ranchers, and consumers, as well as the rural communities that make up our state's agricultural producing regions.

The list of public policy areas of interest to farmers and ranchers is long, but none so important as the rights of property owners afforded by the U.S. and Colorado Constitutions. The ability of American citizens to privately own, control access, and determine the best use of property is the key to the success of Colorado and American agriculture. Property owners are best placed to make decisions on how to use their property in a way that provides the most value based on their individual priorities, subject to reasonable restrictions to protect the livelihoods and quiet enjoyment of their neighbors.

In some areas, the best use of that property may be to grow crops or feed cattle. It may be the best use to construct a dairy or farm stand and sell directly to consumers. In other cases, it may make the most sense for a landowner to engage in the production not of food, but of energy. In Colorado, agriculture producers frequently work to produce both food *and* energy with their property. That energy takes many forms, from traditional oil and natural gas to renewable sources like solar, wind, and biofuels. In either case, farmers and ranchers may best ensure the success of their agricultural enterprise, by diversifying into energy production as well.

Both local and state officials in Colorado must consider this dynamic when enacting land-use policies. Rural communities are suffering both from the COVID-19 crisis and from ongoing economic trends in the agriculture industry. Policies that unnecessarily and arbitrarily limit farmers and ranchers' ability to use their property in a way that will best provide value for their agricultural enterprise are extremely problematic. In many cases, it may mean the difference between success or failure of a particular farm or ranch business, many of which are multigenerational, historic, and a part of Colorado's unique heritage.





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We are extremely concerned about the efforts of your counties, which are among the state's largest and most historic agriculture-producing counties, to limit the ability of farmers and ranchers to engage in energy production on their property. By singling out different forms of energy production for arbitrary regulation and restriction, your policies, at a minimum, serve only to cause economic harm to a particular sector. Caught in the middle are farmers and ranchers, deprived of both financial gains during a time of significant economic stress and their unalienable rights as property owners.

We urge you to put aside grievances and allow farmers, ranchers, landowners, and energy producers to work cooperatively to provide the sustainable energy production, financial security, economic growth, environmental protection, and job creation that has led Colorado to be a national leader in these very areas. Your new regulations on energy production provide none of these benefits.

Our state is a model for this dynamic brand of cooperation between industries and policy priorities. We should continue to be so both during a time of such difficulty and into the future as well.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carlyle W. Currier".

Carlyle Currier
President

