



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Kirby Wynn, Oil & Gas Liaison
DATE: May 4, 2026
SUBJECT: General update on oil and gas activity, energy symposium and state/federal rulemakings

BACKGROUND

Update to Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regarding:

- **Oil and gas liaison activities and local oil and gas activity and issues**
 - **Energy Symposium post-event summary and planning for 2026**
 - **State and Federal oil and gas rulemakings**
- I. Garfield County has prioritized participating in the development of regulations by the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) and the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC). We advocate for rules that best reflect the characteristics of western and rural areas of Colorado including Piceance Basin geology and operations to be more cost-effective and not unduly burdensome or economically punitive to responsible gas development and production.

The Western & Rural Local Governments Coalition (“WLG Coalition”) consists of 23 members: Garfield County, Delta County, Jackson County, Mesa County, Moffat County, Montezuma County, Rio Blanco County, City of Craig, Town of Collbran, Town of Meeker, Town of New Castle, Town of Parachute, Town of Rangely, Town of Silt, and the City of Rifle; as well as Sedgwick County, Phillips County, Logan County, Washington County, Morgan County, Yuma County, Kit Carson County and Cheyenne County.

As an ongoing activity, the oil and gas liaison variously supports or leads county participation in state and federal rulemakings, policy development and resource management processes in coordination with county management and designated Board representatives. Periodic updates are provided to the Board and guidance is provided to staff provided regarding future activities.

CURRENT STATUS ITEMS

I. Local Oil and Gas Activity

Drilling and Permitting:

DRILLING: **Two active drill rigs:** One operated Terra Energy Partners and one operated by QB Energy Oil & Gas in Rio Blanco County. Laramie laid down their rig in February and hope to stand it up to drill in Garfield County this fall. **Chevron is mobilizing a rig this week** to drill two horizontal wells in the May-July period.

County Permitting Activity: We are seeing permitting activity by Terra Energy Partners, Caerus Oil and Gas, Laramie Energy and Chevron at ECMC. A couple permits working through county permitting process.

Citizen concerns and complaint issues:

Few citizen concerns to address in the last few months, generally related to traffic or private road maintenance issues.

II. Energy Advisory Board

The Garfield County Energy Advisory Board continues a quarterly meeting Schedule (March, May, August, December). Recent educational presentations were focused on the various oil and gas state rulemakings.

There are no significant advisory issues for the EAB to offer to the BOCC currently. Citizen comments at EAB have been sparse over the last year and the meetings are centered on educational presentations and updates from industry, citizen and local government representatives. Public comments at EAB are at most 1-2 people per meeting if any. ECMC continues to send a representative to participate as a non-voting member and the USFS and BLM provide updates at each meeting.

III. 2026 12th Annual Energy & Environment Symposium

The April 14-16 Symposium was our largest and perhaps most successful to date. The New Castle venue works extremely well. A few notes and metrics for the symposium--including results from the anonymous attendee survey:

Among 345 registrants, 335 were in attendance. We received anonymous survey feedback from 80 attendees who shared the following opinions:

- 95% were very or extremely satisfied with their two-day experience.
- 97% were very or extremely satisfied with our event organization and management.
- 87% were very or extremely satisfied with the Steak Fry networking and dinner event.
- 89% were very or extremely satisfied with topics and speakers and that number jumps to 97% when we include those who were 'satisfied' with our speakers & topics.
- 93% were very or extremely satisfied with catered Breakfasts and Keynote lunches.
- 91% were very or extremely satisfied with the food and their experience at the Tuesday evening attendee arrival Meet & Greet at the Rifle Ute Theater
- On a scale of 1-10, 82% indicated with a score of 9 or 10 a high likelihood they would recommend colleagues attend in the future, they are strong word of mouth advocates for the event. Numerous comments our event is 'the best or just about the best' conference they have attended.

Event revenue exceeded expenses by a large margin: Ticket and sponsor revenues were well above 2025 levels, allowing us to continue producing the highest quality event with top notch food recruiting great speakers requiring speaking fees and to also account for inflationary event costs.

The event YouTube channel hosts all presentations dating back to 2016. The web link for the presentations is: <http://tinyurl.com/EESymposiumChannel/>

How we pull the symposium together each year: Contractor Victoria Havens, was indispensable as my event planning partner.

We also receive much-needed assistance from other county departments. A special thank you and expression of gratitude for county colleagues who stepped up this year to help our success: Facilities team of Jason Wester, Spencer Evans who did the important job of initial venue setup and added Dave Ebeler and Tracey Lauffer for tear down to convert the room to a 48-table setting for 320. Road and Bridge provided JD Frantz and Jimmy Snowden for event setup and they did an incredible job. From Community Development, Brooke Winschell helped for two full days with event organization and management and all the planners, Heather, John, Philip, Glenn plus Brooke helped with post event clean up and load out. Coral's Fairgrounds team including Jack Stuart and Obed Muneton Ramos delivered the straw and generators for the steak fry AND returned after event to clean up the private property and retrieve the generator.

This strong interdepartmental support goes a long way towards achieving such a successful event that is recognized across the state for excellence in all facets.

IV. COGCC Rulemakings and other topics

ECMC High Priority Habitat Rulemaking: Completed in February. Garfield County and the Western and Rural Local Government Coalition was a party. A different quadrant of the state is the primary focus area each year. This year maps were updated for Southeast Colorado plus Greater Sage Grouse and Raptor maps for Northwest Colorado. Our approach to this rulemaking was to monitor and advocate as needed and to participate as a party. No significant issues cropped up for Garfield County/WRLG/Piceance to address.

V. Air Quality Control Commission Rulemakings

Regulation 7 Rulemaking, February 2026: Completed. WRLG was a party and submitted various filing and written and oral testimony.

Overall WRLG supported the Air Pollution Control Division's proposal to revise Regulation 7 to align Colorado's air quality rules with EPA's NSPS Subpart OOOOc. We recognize the Division's obligation to maintain consistency with federal standards and appreciate the extensive stakeholder engagement that has occurred in this rulemaking. We supported the Small Operator GHG Intensity Exemption Through 2030. —this provision passed and benefits Piceance operators.

Regulations 24, 26 & 30 Priority Toxic Air Contaminants (PTACs) Rulemaking, April 16-17 2026: Completed. WRLG was a party and submitted various filings and written and oral testimony.

WRLG supported science-based PTAC emission control regulations that are technically feasible, cost-effective, and capable of producing tangible public health benefits. Our core concern was avoiding an initial PTAC program that is overly broad, administratively complex, or legally vulnerable—particularly where the burdens fall disproportionately on rural and western Colorado, including natural-gas-dominant basins.

WRLG supported regulated-entity proposed rule refinements where they improve clarity, align the program with the Commission's TAC reporting framework, target controls where they can reduce receptor-relevant exposure risk, and avoid turning this initial PTAC program into a de facto permitting program or facility-by-facility RACT regime. A key priority in the rulemaking, the upstream exemption from additional benzene controls, was preserved; while our ask for a 1,000' rather than 1-mile buffer zone for formaldehyde applicability determination was unsuccessful.

Regulation Number 3 - Permitting and Emissions Reporting and Regulation Number 7 - Emissions Reporting: May 21-22, 2026 WRLG is a party. This is BIG funding grab, in addition to massive permit fees increase in 2024 and 2025 by AQCC to pay for 100+ new FTE they brought on to administer the onslaught of new regulations approved in the last couple of years without an identified funding source.

WRLG's stated interest is ensuring that any additional fee revenue is matched by demonstrable improvements in permitting performance and transparency that matter to rural communities and local government fiscal stability. That is an uphill climb but we are fighting the good fight.

WRLG's local-government focus is that permitting delays and unpredictability have real economic and fiscal consequences in rural regions. If the Commission adopts fee increases or new fee structures in this docket, we ask that the Statement of Basis and Purpose (SBAP) should set clear expectations that measurable efficiency gains and service-quality improvements will occur—and that the benefits of those initiatives will be reflected in future fee requests. WRLG also supports SBAP clarifications regarding ERN implementation timing and when the Division will begin using ERN data as the basis for calculating emissions fees, so regulated entities and local governments have clear, predictable implementation milestones.

- Adopt SBAP language reinforcing the Division's implementation of the Commission's April 2025 SBAP measures, including efficiency, process improvement, transparency, and evaluation of alternative fee measures and permit-processing improvements.
- Include measurable performance expectations for permitting outcomes (e.g., reporting of processing-time metrics by permit type) and regular public reporting to the Commission on progress.
- Require improved billing transparency and invoice detail so applicants can understand what work is performed and identify opportunities to reduce rework and wasteful administrative churn.
- Ensure future fee requests reflect demonstrated efficiency gains and are accompanied by clearer budget-to-actual reporting, workload assumptions, and a plain-language explanation of what performance improvements fee payers are funding.
- Avoid adopting a multi-year fee schedule that extends beyond the Commission's ability to reassess program needs and performance.
- Consider time-bounding significant increases (except where justified) to allow a structured reassessment after efficiency measures are implemented.
- Avoid disproportionate impact on rural western Colorado and natural-gas-dominant basins.
- Pair any adopted fee changes with durable accountability: recurring public reporting on permitting timelines, budget-to-actual spending, invoice details, and measurable efficiency gains.
- Reject adoption of a multi-year fee schedule that reduces the Commission's ability to reassess fees after modernization and process improvements take effect.

VI. Federal Resource and Land Management Processes of note

None currently

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND GUIDANCE REQUESTS

Request continued approval to represent the county in state and federal rulemaking and land and resource management processes in coordination with and in support of County manager and Board representative.