

[Date]

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support- AB 345- Health Buffer Zones

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez,

[Organization's name] writes in support of Assembly Bill 345 by Assemblymember Muratsuchi. AB 345 will mandate a 2,500-foot health and safety buffer zone between new oil and gas wells and sensitive land uses, which include schools, day care centers, residential homes, and hospitals.

AB 345 will protect children and communities from the health and safety hazards associated with oil and gas extraction. Nearly five and a half million Californians—mostly people of color—live within one mile of an oil or gas well.¹ Studies link proximity to oil and gas wells to a host of health impacts, including increased risk of asthma and other respiratory illnesses, pre-term births and high-risk pregnancies, and in some cases, cancer.² Oil and gas extraction produces toxic air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (“VOCs”) like benzene and formaldehyde, fine and ultra-fine particulate matter (“PM”), and hydrogen sulfide. Other harms include water contamination, noise pollution, spills of toxic chemicals, and explosions. A safe distance between drilling operations and residences, schools, and other sensitive places is necessary to avoid these serious public health risks.

Kern and Los Angeles Counties account for over 80 percent of the overall oil production in California, and thus bear the brunt of its health and safety hazards. Every moment that we do not act, our most overburdened residents are paying the price with their health, safety, and quality of life.

Of the approximately five and a half million Californians who live within a mile of one or more oil and gas wells, one-third live in areas most burdened by environmental pollution and 92 percent of Californians living in these overburdened neighborhoods are people of color.³ Given these disproportionate, cumulative impacts on communities of color and low income communities, state action is long overdue to directly address the harms and risks from oil and gas extraction.

In 2015, as a result of Senate Bill 4 (Pavely), the California Council on Science and Technology’s (“CCST”) conducted an analysis of the health and environmental impacts associated with hydraulic fracturing. In that report, the CCST recommended a health and safety buffer zones between sensitive land

¹ Oil Change International, The Sky’s Limit California: Why the Paris Climate Goals Demand That California Lead in a Managed Decline of Oil Extraction (May 2018) at 21, <http://priceofoil.org/ca-skys-limit>

² Center for Biological Diversity, Oil Stain: How Dirty Crude Undermines California’s Climate Progress (November 2017), <https://bit.ly/2Cn0ZEW>

³ Tanja Srebotnjak and Miriam Rotkin-Ellman, “Drilling in California: Who’s at risk?” Natural Resources Defense Council, October 2014, at 4, available at <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/california-fracking-risks-report.pdf>

uses and oil and gas wells in order to protect the health and safety of communities where neighborhood drilling occurs.

We urge your Aye vote for AB 345.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Organization