

**HB13-1275 – Front Range Oil & Gas Human Health Study**  
For the Health District of Northern Larimer County Board of Directors

**Bill Title:** Concerning the collection of human health data regarding oil and gas operations in counties near the Front Range.

**Bill Sponsors:** Rep. Ginal (and 5 others, including Rep. Fischer), Sen. Aguilar.

**Bill History:** March 21, 2013 – Introduced in House

**Date of Summary:** April 5, 2013

**Prepared by:** Dan Sapienza, Policy Coordinator

**BILL SUMMARY** – This bill requires CDPHE to contract with an independent consultant to conduct a review of existing epidemiological data to study the effects of oil and gas operation on human health in four counties along the Front Range (Larimer, Weld, Boulder, and Arapahoe). The study is to be completed by March, 2014 and will be reviewed by an oversight committee. The results may be used to require the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to issue cease-and-desist orders against specific oil and gas operations that are determined by the report to be harmful to health.

**BACKGROUND** – There exists a paucity of conclusive research on the health impacts of oil and gas extraction in Colorado, especially surrounding the practice of hydraulic fracturing. Health impact studies of potential operations have shown some reason for concern, with potential air and water pollution from the operations. With the large number of operations in the Front Range region that are near high population areas, many are concerned that the impacts on health in the future will be large.

Representative Ginal, the drafter of this legislation, represents Fort Collins, which recently voted to ban hydraulic fracturing within City Limits. Opponents of oil and gas extraction argue that the process endangers the health and lives of people living near operations. Representative Ginal, in introducing this legislation, is seeking to bring an epidemiological approach to looking at these claims.

**CONCERNS** – Unfortunately, there are concerns that the methods of the review in this legislation are beyond the capabilities of the science of epidemiology. The bill requires the review to “analyze existing incidence data for an appropriate period of time before and after the commencement of oil and gas operations in each particular geographic area.” This sort of study can only evaluate health conditions that we currently measure and report, such as congenital malformations, cancers, cardiovascular-related deaths, and stroke. With this sort of analyses, it is likely that a related condition will not be seen and it is equally likely that a correlation will be found that does not in fact exist.

**SUPPORTERS** –.

**OPPOSITION** –.

**About this Summary**

This summary was prepared by Health District of Northern Larimer County staff to assist the Health District Board of Directors in determining whether to take an official stand on various health-related issues. The Health District is a special district of the northern two-thirds of Larimer County, Colorado, supported by local property tax dollars and governed by a publicly elected five-member board. The Health District provides medical, mental health, dental, preventive and health planning services to the communities it serves. For more information about this summary or the Health District, please contact Dan Sapienza, Policy Coordinator, at (970) 224-5209, or e-mail at [dsapienza@healthdistrict.org](mailto:dsapienza@healthdistrict.org).