

We are here in Montana as refugees from the effects of natural gas drilling in Colorado.

In 2001 we retired from the mountains of western Colorado to nearby Battlement Mesa, a beautiful, high-desert, PUD, golf-course retirement community along the I-70 corridor between Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction, CO.

In about 2004 drilling for natural gas began to occur in the surrounding area. As the drilling grew closer to Battlement Mesa and fracking began to be used more often, we began to notice the effects. Frequently there was an odor in the air which smelled like a mixture of diesel fuel and permanent wave solution. It finally got so bad that we couldn't open our bedroom door at night and if we went outside, we would get instant headaches. Other people complained of constant headaches and nosebleeds. We attended numerous meetings with gas company representatives in Battlement Mesa, asking them over and over what the smell was. They always replied that it was proprietary information and they couldn't (or wouldn't) tell us. In one area 25 miles away, at least five drinking water wells were found by the county to be contaminated with methane. One man drank a glass of water from his tap and ended up in the hospital, poisoned by chemicals that had seeped into his spring. One creek was so contaminated by methane and benzene that neighbors could light it on fire.

As the drilling increased the community was negatively impacted on many levels including social, environmental and health. In response, a coalition of concerned citizens was formed and they persuaded the county to fund a broad health survey in 2005. The study found some evidence of increased respiratory conditions and recommended ongoing health monitoring, especially of vulnerable populations like children and the elderly.

Finally, in 2008 we could stand it no longer, sold our house for a loss, and escaped to Bozeman.

Since 2008 some progress in addressing negative health impacts in Battlement Mesa and surrounding areas has been made. In 2009 new regulations went into effect in Colorado requiring drilling companies to disclose fracking chemicals to Colorado's public health department in the event of an emergency. In February, 2010 the Battlement Mesa coalition of concerned citizens successfully pushed Garfield County to fund a health assessment of the Battlement Mesa area before approving Antero Resources proposal to drill within the Battlement Mesa PUD. It will be one of the first times that regulators in the US will be asked to consider a detailed health assessment when permitting natural gas drilling. The draft health assessment was completed in September 2010 and the final draft is scheduled to be released soon. The director of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission has committed to considering the health assessment and both the county and the commission could attach health stipulations to Antero's drilling permit.

We urge you to pass this important legislation. People who are subjected to the many impacts of natural gas drilling should absolutely have the right to know what chemicals

they may be exposed to both in the air and in the water. It is difficult, if not impossible, to diagnose and treat health issues without knowing what chemicals are being used.

If the chemicals used were disclosed to the public, health professionals and industry engineers could ideally work together to come up with drilling techniques which would make it possible to extract necessary natural resources without negative impacts on the health of the population in the area.

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