

FCSG Statement of Support for Proposition 112

Post updated on October 16, 2018

Update: On Tuesday, October 16, City Council rejected the recommendation of the Legislative Review Committee and declined to take a position on Proposition 112.

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) fully supports Proposition 112, "Increased Setback Requirement for Oil and Natural Gas Development", which appears on the November ballot. If this proposition is approved by Colorado voters, new oil and gas wells would need to be located at least 2,500 feet away from occupied buildings and other vulnerable areas. This setback distance would substantially lower both the chronic risks to human health associated with oil and gas extraction and the acute health risks posed by explosions and fires near wellheads.

In 2013, voters in Fort Collins approved a five year fracking moratorium by a significant margin. In May of this year, the Fort Collins City Council voted to support the Martinez amicus brief. That brief calls on the Colorado Supreme Court to uphold a lower court ruling that the Colorado Oil and Gas Commissioner must take public health and safety concerns into account when considering proposed state rules for oil and gas extraction.

Given these votes by Fort Collins residents and City Council, we are shocked that the Council's Legislative Review Committee would recommend a "No" vote on Proposition 112. This recommendation appears to be entirely disconnected with the expressed will of the community and City Council. We urge the full council to reject that recommendation and instead vote to **support** the proposition.

We note that opponents of Proposition 112 claim that 2,500 foot setbacks would shut down the oil and gas industry in Colorado. We view this claim as ill-founded and overblown, since horizontal wells can economically be drilled substantially further than that distance. However, we need to recognize that in order to avoid the most severe consequences of climate change, we will need to leave the majority of known fossil fuel reserves – including oil and natural gas - in the ground. If Proposition 112 advances us in any way toward that goal, that would be an achievement to be celebrated, not feared.