March 25, 2019

The Weld County Fire Chiefs Association represents a cohort of Fire Chiefs from over 20 Fire Department Agencies within Weld County, Colorado. We are specifically authorized by Colorado Revised Statutes Title 32 et. seq. charged with the safety, well-being and risk reduction of the general public and our communities at large from threat of fire, explosion, release of hazardous materials as well as all other hazards. As you may be aware, these duties are conducted in our County which produces 89% of Colorado’s crude oil and 40% of its natural gas from its 21,000+ wells safely, each and every day.

As public safety providers, Colorado, we utilize our experience, technical resources and first-hand knowledge in this regard; we might be as bold as to say the most significant in the state and arguably the nation. Our research and experience have identified the Oil and Gas Industry as the safest of all target hazards we currently manage today and by orders of magnitude under existing state and local regulations already in place. Specifically, this industry has improved the safety culture of our communities as well as our resilience with significant economic impacts to our budgets and in turn our emergency operations.

As “Safety” was named as the purported cornerstone of Senate Bill 19-181, many of us here in Weld County, the primary location of the Oil and Gas industry of Colorado, were never contacted or queried. There has been no dialogue about actual dangers or concerns by those who are responding to these risks in our communities where most of this industry is working. It seems as though some inquiry, consultation, and outreach by SB19-181 legislation authors and other legislators would have been prudent before drafting and certainly after the bill has been introduced.

Given the lack of responsible expert input, palpable rush through the legislative process, and the significant negative financial impacts to our communities, the Weld County Fire Chiefs Association formally oppose Senate Bill 19-181. We also respectfully request the support and alliance of the Colorado State Fire Chief’s Association and all other Emergency Services agencies on this critical issue. On any issue as large as this; one could severely impact a significant part of the great State of Colorado; this support is crucial.

Sincerely yours in service.

Jeremy A. Young, EFO, CFO, MIFireE
President of Weld County Fire Chiefs Association