

Toolkit for Public Action on Ozone

This toolkit is provided as part of a multi-group campaign for calling on our leaders to hold the oil and gas industry accountable this summer as the largest cause of ozone in Colorado's Front Range. Groups involved include 350 Colorado, Moms Clean Air Force, WildEarth Guardians, and Sierra Club.

How you can take action (outlined below):

1. **Send an email quickly now with this [one-click letter](#)** to Gov. Polis, the AQCC (Air Quality Control Commission), the COGCC (CO Oil and Gas Conservation Commission), and the RAQC (Regional Air Quality Council).
2. **Share on social media** to urge friends to send an email too! (See graphics and [sample social media posts/tweets below](#))
3. Have a minute more to help?
 - a. [Call the Governor](#)
 - b. Write a separate letter to the [AQCC](#) and [COGCC](#). Here are [Talking points](#)

Background information: The north Front Range area has been in violation of the EPA air quality thresholds for ozone ever since they were created in 2008. The EPA will soon downgrade part of this nonattainment area from 'serious' to 'severe', and the AQCC/APCD is required to make a new State Implementation Plan (SIP) to address this. The Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE) is telling Coloradans to drive less to solve the problem, when in reality oil and gas operations cause 1.5 times more ozone pollution than driving cars! The Polis administration, AQCC and COGCC need to hold the oil and gas industry accountable and stop oil & gas production during ozone season in the summer. The SIP rulemaking will happen in December and public comments will be taken until September. Commenting soon and often will be the best way to influence the developing rule. Thanks for taking action and urging others to make their voices heard!

[Map of area that will be downgraded to 'severe'](#)

Sample Social Media graphics, posts and tweets:

- **Graphic:**



- **Sample Facebook post:** Colorado has been downgraded by the EPA from a 'serious' to a 'severe' ozone nonattainment status. The Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE) is just telling us to drive less to solve the problem, when in reality oil and gas operations cause 1.5 times more ozone pollution than driving cars! Tell Gov. Polis, AQCC and COGCC to hold the oil and gas industry accountable and stop fossil fuel production during ozone season in the summer. #TruthAboutOzone #DoYourPartBigOil #ItTakesAllOfUs [Link to 1 click letter]
- **Sample Tweet:** #TruthAboutOzone #DoYourPartBigOil #ItTakesAllOfUs @govofco We need your help to reduce ozone. Colorado has suffered this major health hazard for far too long and we need to get serious.
- Or retweet our tweet here!

Call the Governor:

Governor Polis should direct the APCD to create the strongest Ozone rules possible. Oil and Gas is the number one cause of ozone in Colorado. Emissions should be lowered through decreased operations during ozone season, and transportation emissions should be lowered through even more support for transit and through increased public education.

Governor's Office: (303) 866-2471

Sample phone script to Governor's office (you will just reach a voicemail or an aide). Hello, my name is _____ and I am a constituent in [city or zip code]. I am calling about ozone pollution in our state and the upcoming rulemaking regarding our downgrade to severe ozone nonattainment status by the EPA. Ozone is a serious public health threat. I am calling upon the Governor to direct the APCD and AQCC to make the strongest rules possible to protect the public from the dangers of ozone. Oil and Gas need to be held accountable as the number one cause of ozone in our state. Sources that cause ozone also emit greenhouse gases and strong ozone rules can also help us meet ghg targets. The fare-free transit for 30 days during ozone season is a great start and I thank him for that, but we need to be even more proactive.

If you want to send a written message, here are some platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/jaredpolis/>
<https://twitter.com/govofco>
<https://www.instagram.com/govofco/>
[Governor's Dashboard Feedback Form](#)

Governorpolis@state.co.us

<https://www.colorado.gov/governor/share-comments>

To AQCC:

The AQCC and APCD should pass rules as strong as possible to protect public health. We create rules not just with the goal of checking the box for the EPA, but to actually improve public health. See [talking points](#) below.

cdphe.aqcc-comments@state.co.us

To COGCC:

The COGCC should pass rules to decrease oil and gas operations during ozone season. Ozone is a severe health hazard and Oil and Gas is the number one contributor to ozone. See [talking points](#) below

Director Murphy: julie.murphy@state.co.us

Chair Robbins: jeff.robbins@state.co.us

Commissioner McGowan: Karin.McGowan@state.co.us

Commissioner Messner: john.messner@state.co.us

Commissioner Ackerman: brett.ackerman@state.co.us

Commissioner Cross: mike.cross@state.co.us

Talking points to draw on for all comments:

Begin with saying who you are and why you are concerned about ozone pollution in our state. End with saying what you want them to do.

General talking points

- We have been above the EPA threshold for 15 years. What we have been doing hasn't been working. We need much stronger strategies and rules to address this.

- The draft State Implementation Plan does not decrease the emissions of Oil and Gas: instead it allows Oil and Gas to increase their emissions of VOCs and NOx that cause ozone by 11%,
- Oil and Gas operations are the largest source of Ozone precursors in the nonattainment area according to the Regional Air Quality Council data.¹ They have separated the oil and gas impacts into 3 segments but when you add them all together they are 1.5 times the impact of cars, and 1.26 times the impact of all transportation.
- Low income communities and people of color are disproportionately burdened by air pollution and its impacts, and we need to take action on this environmental justice issue.
- We need to reduce emissions from oil and gas and get gas-burning cars off the road.
- Oil and Gas activities should be reduced during ozone season and on high ozone days.
- Recently passed rules for Oil and Gas are not enough, and additional rules will be necessary.
- Strong rules to improve ozone pollution will also reduce greenhouse gases, and we have no time to lose in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to solve the climate crisis.
- The Governor should make sure that the transit system and bike and ped infrastructure are strong enough to make these ways of getting around safe and convenient so people won't want to drive when they don't have to.

Health Impacts

- Get an overview of health impacts on the [American Lung Association website](#)
- Ozone has very serious health consequences even at levels lower than the threshold, but impacts increase as ozone levels increase.
- Ozone health impacts are seen with short-term exposure as well as long-term exposure and will be made worse from climate change. They are also amplified when they are combined with other pollutants.
- The 2013 EPA research review revealed that ozone causes respiratory harm such as worsened asthma, worsened COPD and inflammation; is likely to cause early death from both short- and long-term exposure; is likely to cause cardiovascular harm including heart attacks, strokes, heart disease and congestive heart failure; may cause harm to

¹ RAQC presentation "Ozone Plan Development Overview," slide 14, https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1mBXb_jq3xpXICnbZA5Z4_qHi8Xz0-U1-. Adding all 3 sources of oil and gas emissions together, total is 8.6 ppb, compared to 5.7 for light duty vehicles (cars). Also, table 8 of the draft SIP shows oil and gas combined emissions of ozone precursors (VOC and NOx) are almost twice as much as those from cars.
https://raqc.egnyte.com/dl/rUuJYId92D/DRAFT_SIP_for_RAQC_Board_Version_2.pdf_

the central nervous system; and may cause reproductive and developmental harm. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Integrated Science Assessment for Ozone and Related Photochemical Oxidants*, 2013. EPA/600/R-10/076F, quoted by the American Lung Association at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10992108/>)

- One study predicts that in Colorado alone, by 2025 ozone from oil and gas will cause an average of 34 premature deaths per year, and particulate pollution from oil and gas will cause an average of 37 premature deaths per year. (N. Fann et al., “Assessing Human Health PM_{2.5} and Ozone Impacts from U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Sector Emissions in 2025,” *Environmental Science & Technology* 52, no. 15 (2018): 8095–8103, <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.8b02050>)
- Ozone is linked to increased mortality from all non-accidental causes, and from cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, coronary diseases, ischemic heart disease, respiratory disease, COPD, hypertension, coronary diseases, and stroke. (Lim, Chris C et al. “Long-Term Exposure to Ozone and Cause-Specific Mortality Risk in the United States.” *American journal of respiratory and critical care medicine* vol. 200,8 (2019): 1022-1031. doi:10.1164/rccm.201806-1161OC, Yin et al. 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP1849>)
- Our mail carriers and other outdoor workers deserve clean air. Those who work outside or play outside will suffer decreased lung function from ozone effects even if they do not have any existing respiratory issues. (Schelegle ES, Morales CA, Walby WF, Marion S, Allen RP. 2009. “6.6-hour inhalation of ozone concentrations from 60 to 87 parts per billion in healthy humans.” *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, 180(3):265–272 Aug 1;180(3):265-72. doi: 10.1164/rccm.200809-1484OC)
- Veterans who have been exposed to agent orange may have respiratory issues and ischemic heart disease which are both exacerbated by ozone. <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/>
- This is also a disability rights issue as people with cerebral palsy can have respiratory issues that increase their vulnerability to ozone, and this impact is further increased by systemic barriers making access to appropriate healthcare for people with disabilities (Drainoni et al., *Cross-disability experiences of barriers to healthcare access* 2006)
- Ozone has been shown to lead to many other health impacts including cognitive decline, preterm birth, sperm count and quality, onset of asthma in children, worsening of asthma in children, lower birth weight and decreased lung function in newborns, increased hospital admissions for asthma and other respiratory issues, increased hospital admissions for cardiopulmonary and cardiovascular issues, injury and structural changes to the airway, decreased lung function, and lung disease. (EPA and WHO)