

Angie Binder, Colorado Petroleum Association

BY DAN LARSON • FOR ENERGY PIPELINE



◀ Angie Binder, Executive Director,
Colorado Petroleum Association

SETS IT APART

With five associations representing oil and natural gas and dozens of others that speak for general business and commercial interests in Colorado, we asked Binder what differentiates CPA?

“Well, CPA is one of the longest standing trades in Colorado,” Binder replied. “The oil and gas industry is highly regulated and there are plenty of issues that require the attention of a trade organization. The CPA has always focused on refining and fuels issues, air quality and tax policy, as well as upstream issues.”

“As a smaller group, we can home in on very specific issues. We can also give a smaller operator a bigger voice than they might have in a larger group,” she added. “We are looking to add new members this year.”

Binder noted that CPA members come from all parts of the state and some from outside Colorado, too. And, whether a company produces in Colorado or brings a product into the state, the industry recognizes Colorado as a bellwether on energy policy, the CPA executive stated.

Binder is a native of Lamar. She earned an undergraduate degree from Metro State University, and a masters certificate at University of Denver. She reports serving in town, county and state governments, and was senior director of government affairs at Encana Corp. for more than eight years. More recently, Binder served as public information and legislative coordinator at Colorado Community College System. Binder added that over her career, she has traveled to all parts of Colorado and has been in all but three of Colorado’s 64 counties.

“I’m fortunate to bring a unique perspective to energy discussions in Colorado,” Binder said.

Angie Binder is right where she wants to be.

As she remarked on her one-year anniversary as executive director of the Colorado Petroleum Association, Binder says she considers herself fortunate to be leading one of the oldest trade groups in the state and working with some of the best professionals in the industry.

Binder’s first weeks on the job were spent working with her board of directors and other business leaders during the turbulent closing days of the 2017 legislative session. Although she has spent most of her career working with and for government at all levels, leading a trade group that often finds itself in the eye of the storm is a unique experience, she says.

“No matter how many times you walk into the Capitol, there’s always something new and different,” she observes. “It is always interesting.”

Binder was hired by CPA to succeed Stan Dempsey, the organization’s long-time president, who resigned in July 2016 to take a similar position with the Colorado Mining Association.

LOCAL ISSUES

With the 2018 session of the Colorado legislature well underway, the local control issue has again risen to the top of the agenda for those opposed to oil and gas, Binder says.

"Local control is the biggest issue," for opponents during the first weeks of the session, she said.

A bill sponsored by Sen. Matt Jones and Rep. Mike Foote, both Democrats from Boulder County, the Protect Act, SB 48, was introduced Jan. 10 and would provide local governments with "authority over oil and gas facilities."

The bill would have repealed the state's primacy on local land use decisions and shifted that authority to counties and municipal governments. It also would have allowed local governments to refuse oil and gas operations to "protect public safety, health, and welfare of citizens."

The bill was sent to the State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee where it was postponed indefinitely in a 3-2 vote, on Jan. 29.

"With our split Legislature, I don't see much chance for big changes like that this passing

year," Binder said. But the issue is fairly likely to continue to return for more legislative review.

FAMILIAR ISSUE

The tug-of-war between local and state government is not new, she added.

"What's different today is the rapid growth we are seeing in Colorado," she said. Cities and towns, especially along the northern Front Range, are growing quickly and often, that growth is right on top of the resources.

As the northern Front Range faces a tremendous growth surge, new subdivisions appear seemingly overnight where previously crops grew or cattle grazed. In February's Energy Pipeline, we looked at data showing that the nine Front Range counties now are home to 79 percent of Colorado's population.

Given that those same counties make up the prolific DJ Basin, where new efficiencies in drilling and completions have made Colorado the seventh largest oil producing state in the nation, conflicts are sure to follow.

"It is easy to understand why people can feel frustrated. They go to their town council and want them to do something right then," she said.

Statewide rules are necessary, Binder added, because some rights, such as mineral and water rights, have to be protected on that level or they will be lost. "State rules protecting the property rights of mineral owners should not be subject to local political whim," she said.

State agencies also have the technical staff with the education and experience to understand these very technical operations.

When legislation or a ballot initiative seeks to push new wells further and further from the nearest house, the ultimate goal is to restrict drilling over a much wider area than just a neighborhood, Binder said.

"Setbacks are not a new issue or one just aimed at oil and gas," she said. "It is an issue that has been addressed several times now."

Previous rule-makings have tackled proximity concerns and adjusted new-well setback distance, she said.



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Title: Executive Director, Colorado Petroleum Association
Hometown: Lamar, Colo.
Current Residence: Denver
Professional Background: Served in various roles in local and state governments; government affairs advisor at Encana Oil and Gas; director of communications and legislative coordinator at Colorado Community College System

Education: Bachelor's degree, Metro State University; Master's certificate, University of Denver
Last Book You Read: "Artemis," by Andy Weir
Best Piece of Advice You've Gotten and Used: Late last year I was asked what I was going to learn new in 2018. I decided I wanted to learn to play a musical instrument and I am now the proud owner of a guitar, taking lessons and spending my free time practicing guitar

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Today, permit reviews take into account the difference between rural areas and cities. Local governments are encouraged, and many participate in the local government designee program that connects local officials with the well development process, giving them the opportunity to review and comment on projects of interest to their residents.

Binder cites examples of companies working with local government from the early stages of a drilling program.

"We have seen companies spend months working out Memorandums of Understanding with local government before proceeding with development," Binder said. "These MOUs even include comprehensive plans that look

several years down the road. A big part of that work is to avoid surprises."

Nevertheless, a group opposed to oil and gas development proposed a ballot initiative for the next election that would prohibit drilling within 2,500 feet of occupied buildings and "vulnerable areas" such as playgrounds and water sources.

Dubbed Initiative 97, the setback question was given initial approval by the Secretary of State's office in January and immediately challenged by industry on the basis that would grant local governments the authority to determine those vulnerable areas to be protected.

Industry objections cited a 2016 study by University of Colorado that concluded a 2,500 setback would eliminate access to over 90 percent of land

available for oil and gas development. As a result, "Colorado could lose 104,000 jobs annually over the next 15 years, the state's GDP would decline an average of \$14 billion, and Coloradans stood to lose an \$8.3 billion annually in real income," according to the industry brief.

Binder concluded that Colorado has a long history of regulating oil and gas operations and working with industry and communities to resolve thorny issues.

Problems arise when "the discourse gets so loud it's difficult to have any sort of public policy discussions," she said, citing noisy protests at recent commission meetings.

"These issues are not new," Binder notes. "It's just a lot louder now and everything is amplified through social media." ♣