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## **GOV. RITTER PRAISES NEW OIL-AND-GAS RULES**

Gov. Bill Ritter today praised the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission for its unanimous adoption of new rules that will provide greater natural resource protections while also allowing the state's vital oil-and-gas industry to thrive.

"Colorado is blessed with some of the richest natural-gas reserves in the country," Gov. Ritter said. "Over the past 10 years, we have seen an 800 percent increase in the number of new drilling permits issued annually, but not until now have we addressed the water, wildlife and public health impacts of this record-setting drilling."

By the end of this year, the commission and its staff will have issued nearly 8,000 new drilling permits in 2008, with nearly 37,000 active well heads across Colorado.

"These new rules strike an important balance that will protect the environment while encouraging responsible industry growth," Gov. Ritter said. "They ensure timely and efficient permitting. They protect drinking water supplies. They reduce odors and air emissions. They require operators to disclose chemicals used in drilling and they increase regulatory transparency."

Over the past 18 months, the commission undertook the most extensive and comprehensive set of public hearings in state history -- 21 days of public hearings, 12 hours of public comment from nearly 200 people, and another 75 hours of testimony from roughly 160 oil-and-gas industry and staff witnesses. The commission reviewed thousands of pages of written comments, witness testimony and exhibits, and deliberated for more than 70 hours.

"Unfortunately, the oil-and-gas industry -- like every other industry -- is suffering from the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes," Gov. Ritter said. "Commodity prices have plummeted. Credits lines are frozen. And Colorado lacks a sufficient pipeline transmission infrastructure to move our vast natural gas resources to market. In my suggestions to President-elect Obama about an economic-recovery package, I have proposed greater investments in pipeline infrastructure.

"I am proud of the commission and my administration for its handling of this rulemaking process. We actively solicited industry input, and the rules now reflect that input. I look forward to seeing the process finalized during the upcoming legislative session.

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