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To Pew Charitable Trust,

Garfield County sits in the northwest Colorado and has a population of 55,000 people. Situated in the natural gas rich Piceance Basin, Garfield County has been at the epicenter of gas development in Western Colorado for the last 6 years, with approximately 6,800 wells drilled and 1,990 new permits issued in 2009. Projections by industry, federal and state sources indicate that our county will be home to approximately 20,000 total wells in the next 15-20 years.

Over the next 6-15 years, Antero Resources proposes to construct 200 natural gas wells on 10 well pads along with all supporting infrastructure within the 3200-acre Battlement Mesa Planned Unit Development. Citizens in the Battlement Mesa community, an area of unincorporated Garfield County, have petitioned the Garfield County Commissioners for a thorough study of public health, safety and welfare concerns associated with urban natural gas development. The County Commissioners have responded by directing my department to develop a community health study that will address the citizens' specific requests. We have chosen to address these requests through a collaborative effort involving the Colorado School of Public Health, local citizens, local health care practitioners, and industry partners. This community health study, distinct from the HIA, will build upon the HIA and the relationships developed through the HIA process.

A Health Impact Assessment(HIA), aimed at addressing the Comprehensive Drilling Plan (CDP), the Major Land Use Impact Review (MLUIR) permit applications by Antero Resources, will guide state and local decision makers toward an acceptable development and production plan in the Battlement Mesa area, which, for the next 30-40 years, will promote good health and a healthy way of life for Battlement Mesa citizens, as well as citizens of the near-by town of Parachute. Antero Resources Battlement Mesa CDP will be one of the first to be approved under new Colorado Oil and Gas Regulations. As such, this project stands to be a model for further oil, gas and other natural resource development projects in Garfield County, other Colorado counties and other states in the West.

While Antero Resources Battlement Mesa development plan is not large compared to overall Colorado development, it is within a residential community. Semi-rural/rural areas such as Battlement Mesa may be at greater risk for adverse health impacts than more urban or suburban areas. This development scenario, much of which is planned to occur within several hundred feet of people's homes, could create potential exposures to such chemicals as the BTEX compounds. Other exposures, such as ozone and particulates, may be more widespread and due to the sum of development of the region. In addition, the Battlement Mesa community water source is the Colorado River, which will be evaluated for exposure potential as well. An HIA for this community will allow us to address local concerns and *in situ* exposures as well as begin policy discussions regarding more far-reaching exposures. Garfield County has GIS data for all natural gas wells that can assist in pinpointing potential exposures in relation to homes.

Through our experience with gas development, Garfield County also understands the other potential effects this industry may have to mental and community health. Once development begins, the needs of rapid population growth are not easily absorbed into these communities. Preliminary local data reveals an upward trend for adverse mental and physical health outcomes, traffic accidents, violent crime and substance abuse rates in the county. An HIA will present our department with information about these types of issues and present the opportunity to provide county and state agencies with recommendations to ameliorate such impacts.

Garfield County Public Health is also interested in maximizing the positive aspects of gas development on our community. Since it is understood that employment is an important determinant of health in this country, we may be interested in programs that help our citizens meet employment requirements for the different aspects of the industry. We may also consider how increased municipal income can provide ways for improvements in the delivery of health services, expand health education, and grow recreational programs, particularly for at risk populations such as children and the elderly.

Some initial steps of a HIA have already been initiated and may be further built upon. Antero Resources has held numerous public meetings about their proposed development plans. These meetings have identified numerous community concerns. The Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) has completed a preliminary literature review. While GCPH will continue to work toward development of a community health monitoring program, a HIA can accomplish our ultimate goal of improving the health of our citizens by proactively identifying health concerns and taking actions to prevent adverse health outcomes. The opportunity to conduct both HIA and community health study in Battlement Mesa will provide added value to each project.

Battlement Mesa is well situated for an HIA because of the well informed and active residents and citizens groups that have asked for this kind of proactive approach to gas development. By including the citizens in this collaborative effort, we anticipate that the community will advocate for the implementation of the recommendations of the HIA.

We strongly endorse the Colorado School of Public Health Battlement Mesa HIA grant proposal. We ask the Pew Charitable Trust to fund this HIA as a model example for the energy industry, extractive industries and as a model for the counties and states of the American West.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James A. Rada". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

James A. Rada, REHS
Environmental Health Director