

## Oil and Gas Health Threats in La Plata County

Right now, the oil and gas industry is recklessly leaking millions of tons of methane pollution and toxic chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde & ethylbenzene into the air that harm our health and speed up climate change. These industrial leaks are like an invisible oil spill happening every day.

Peer-reviewed science shows that living near polluting oil and gas facilities is associated with negative health impacts, including fetal defects and respiratory ailments. The county exceeds the Environmental Protection Agency's level of concern for cancer risk. In La Plata County, there are **3,181 oil and gas facilities**. **La Plata County also has the highest respiratory health risk in Colorado**. Within the half mile threat radius of these facilities there are:

- 17,605 people - **more than 34% of the La Plata County population**
- **2,719 Latino people** - more than 40% of the county's Latino population
- **4 schools**

Although scientific literature shows that health impacts are also associated at distances greater than 1/2 mile, we conservatively use 1/2 mile because it is the distance at which these impacts have been most clearly correlated.

The Oil and Gas Threat Map provides innovative new ways of understanding the pressing problem that oil and gas pollution poses to our public health. Safeguards are urgently needed to protect the public from existing sources of methane pollution. The Obama administration recently

finalized the first national standard for new sources of methane pollution from the oil and gas industry and we stand ready to work with them to finalize a standard for existing sources as well.