

## NRDC Letter ATTACHMENT #1: Fact Sheet

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### California Oil & Gas Regulations: Strongest in the World?

Since the passage of SB4, many people have been claiming that California now has the strongest oil and gas regulations in the world, or at least in the US. But is there any truth to this statement?

While we support California's efforts to update its rules, there are many additional improvements that must be made to address the full range of environmental and human health risks associated with oil and gas development. The technology used in oil and gas production has evolved rapidly but, unfortunately, regulation has not kept pace. California's current rules are outdated and insufficient to protect human health and the environment.

Below we provide examples of states with stronger rules than California's existing and proposed rules.<sup>1</sup>

Category of Regulations	Details	Stronger Rules
SETBACKS	California doesn't have any statewide rules on how close wells can be homes, schools, hospitals, public buildings, water supplies, or other sensitive receptors.	Colorado Illinois Pennsylvania
STIMULATION	California's proposed definition of "stimulation" includes vague terms and arbitrary thresholds with no legal or scientific basis. This means that some fracking and acidizing jobs will be subject to the rules while others will be exempt, despite the fact that they could pose the exact same risks.	Wyoming
STIMULATION	Sometimes fracking in one well can impact another nearby well, known in industry as "communicating." Communication during fracturing can lead to blowouts or damage nearby wells, putting groundwater at risk. California doesn't require operators to address this risk.	Alberta (CAN)
STIMULATION	Fracking and acidizing use a range of chemicals, some of which can be toxic or otherwise hazardous, including toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, formaldehyde, and hydrofluoric acid. California doesn't put any restrictions on the chemicals that can be used.	Illinois Wyoming
WELL CONSTRUCTION	California doesn't require materials used in well construction, like casing and cement, to meet industry standards for quality.	Ohio Texas Wyoming
WELL CONSTRUCTION	In order to function properly, the cement used in oil and gas wells needs to set up for a certain amount of time before being disturbed, but California doesn't have statewide requirements for drillers to do so.	Alaska Arkansas BLM Colorado

<sup>1</sup> No state consistently meets what NRDC considers to be best practices and each state's regulations have areas where they are weaker, so this comparison should not be seen as an endorsement of any particular rules or of any state's regulatory program. Although some of the regulations in the places listed below fall short of the best practices NRDC recommends, we provide these examples to demonstrate that other states have stronger regulations than California's existing and proposed rules and also regulate categories of practice about which California's current regulations are completely silent.

		Louisiana Montana New Mexico New York North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania Texas West Virginia Wyoming
WELL CONSTRUCTION	To make sure that a well was properly designed and built, it is important to pressure test the steel pipes (casing) after they're installed in the well, but California doesn't have statewide requirements for drillers to do so.	Alaska BLM Colorado Louisiana Montana New Mexico North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania Texas Wyoming
WASTE WATER	Oil and gas development produces millions of gallons of waste water, known as produced water, which can be many times saltier than seawater and contain hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and naturally occurring radioactive material. Most of this waste water gets injected into disposal wells. A recent review found that California's rules for these wells are flawed and may be endangering groundwater.	EPA
INDUCED SEISMICITY	Injecting fluids underground, including for hydraulic fracturing or waste water disposal, can cause earthquakes, known as induced seismicity. California doesn't require drillers to address the risk that their operations could cause earthquakes.	Ohio
METHANE EMISSIONS	Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas, and it is emitted by various pieces of equipment and activities throughout the oil and gas production process. California doesn't require operators to control some of the biggest sources of these emissions, such as the methane released after fracking.	Colorado Ohio Wyoming