



Nov. 6, 2017

Mr. Ryan Zinke, Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

We, the undersigned western elected officials, write to oppose the proposed suspension of certain requirements within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) methane waste prevention rule to limit natural gas waste from the oil and gas industry operating on our public lands. We, elected officials from across the Interior West, strongly support this recently adopted rule to reduce the venting, leaking and flaring of methane, because it will cut natural gas waste on federal and tribal lands, help ensure a fair return to local governments and the taxpaying public, put our energy resources to good use, and clean up our air.

This critical regulation was written and adopted by due process with the input of multiple diverse stakeholders and upheld by the U.S. Senate on May 10, 2017. Prior to the Senate vote last spring, 120 local, elected officials across the West wrote to U.S. Senators asking them to keep this commonsense rule. Your commitment to now undo these guidelines – after the U.S. Senate and American public have spoken -- is an inexcusable waste of taxpayer resources. Instead of preparing for the implementation of the rule as we should be, our time and efforts are now focused on defending a rule that received due process.

As many of us wrote to Senators last spring, the BLM's rule to reduce methane waste from venting and flaring protects the interests of our western communities and constituents in a number of important ways:

- The rule cuts the waste of American energy resources. On federal and tribal lands, the rule would save more than \$330 million worth of natural gas annually that

Western Leaders Network

1309 East 3rd Avenue • Suite 22 • Post Office Box 4433 • Durango, Colorado 81302

970-317-4264 • westernleaders.org

could be used to heat homes, power vehicles or generate electricity. In fact, enough natural gas is wasted on these lands to supply 760,000 households each year.

- The rule ensures a fair return to taxpayers. States, tribes and federal taxpayers lose royalty revenues when natural gas is wasted – as much as \$800 million over a decade, according to a report from the Western Values Project. Federal royalties are split about evenly between the federal government and the states, and then used to help fund education; infrastructure projects, such as roads and bridges; and mitigation projects to address the impacts of energy development to western communities.
- The rule helps clean up our air. The same leaks that lead to natural gas waste also release toxic and smog-forming pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene. The same technologies that reduce natural gas waste also limit these other harmful pollutants and prevent asthma attacks and other smog-induced respiratory problems among our constituents.
- The rule helps create American jobs. Efforts to cut methane waste have put American entrepreneurs to work creating innovative, cutting-edge technologies to make it economically feasible for oil and gas companies to achieve reductions. A national rule to cut methane waste on public and tribal lands helps to deepen investment and create more jobs in our communities.

Leading oil and natural gas companies and several states, including Colorado, Wyoming, and Ohio, have successfully adopted programs to reduce methane — the primary component of natural gas—and other air pollution from the oil and gas industry. After Colorado adopted the nation’s first-ever rule to cut methane waste and pollution, with support from both environmental advocates and oil and gas operators three years ago, the state’s oil and gas industry has continued to grow. Colorado’s oil production increased by 22 percent, natural gas production is up 3 percent, and the number of oil and gas wells also increased by 4 percent, according to annual production data from the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. Smart regulations designed to limit waste, like Colorado’s Regulation 7 and the BLM’s methane rule, can benefit production and economic activity.

This rule has strong bipartisan support among the public. A bipartisan poll by Colorado College found that 80 percent of westerners’ support action to cut natural gas waste on public lands, and a broad and diverse array of western stakeholders supported the BLM natural gas waste rule.

Time, money and resources should be dedicated to the successful implementation of the regulation rather than the delay or elimination of it. The rule was drafted and adopted with input and buy-in from multiple stakeholders, including local governments, our constituents – the American taxpayers, and oil and gas industry representatives. Your efforts to delay or eliminate the rule defy common sense, favor a few private interests and illustrate a disregard for the health and financial welfare of the American public and local governments. We urge you to abandon your attempts to delay, revise or repeal the methane waste prevention rule and work with us and all other stakeholders on the rule's implementation.

Sincerely,

Arizona

Jim McCarthy
Flagstaff City Councilor

Kathy Chandler-Henry
Eagle County Commissioner

Colorado

KC Becker
House of Representatives

Jeanne McQueeney
Eagle County Commissioner

Mike Foote
House of Representatives

Jill Ryan
Eagle County Commissioner

Faith Winter
House of Representatives

Gail Watson
Gilpin County Commissioner

Eva Henry
Adams County Commissioner

Jonathan Houck
Gunnison County Commissioner

Nancy Jackson
Arapahoe County Commissioner

Josh Joswick
Former La Plata County Commissioner

Michael Whiting
Archuleta County Commissioner

Gwen Lachelt
La Plata County Commissioner

Deb Gardner
Boulder County Commissioner

Wally White
Former La Plata County Commissioner

Elise Jones
Boulder County Commissioner

Mike Brazell
Park County Commissioner

Steve Child
Pitkin County Commissioner

George Newman
Pitkin County Commissioner

Greg Poschman
Pitkin County Commissioner

Rachel Richards
Pitkin County Commissioner

Tim Corrigan
Routt County Commissioner

Jason Anderson
Saguache County Commissioner

Hilary Cooper
San Miguel County Commissioner

Kris Holstrom
San Miguel County Commissioner

Joan May
San Miguel County Commissioner

Karn Stiegelmeier
Summit County Commissioner

Aaron Brockett
Boulder City Councilor

Suzanne Jones
Mayor, City of Boulder

Mary Dolores Young
Boulder City Councilor

Dan Richardson
Mayor, Town of Carbondale

Sweetie Marbury
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Durango

Christina Rinderle
Former Mayor, City of Durango

Tina Harris
Mayor, Town of Erie

Bennett Boeschstein
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Grand Junction

Duke Wortmann
Grand Junction City Councilor

Chelsea Behanna
Lafayette City Councilor

Christine Berg
Mayor, City of Lafayette

Gustavo Reyna
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Lafayette

Stephanie Walton
Lafayette City Councilor

Polly Christensen
Longmont City Councilor

Joan Peck
Longmont City Councilor

Bob Muckle
Mayor, City of Louisville

Connie Sullivan
Mayor, Town of Lyons

Kristopher Larsen
Mayor, Town of Nederland

Bob Sirkus
Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Snowmass
Village

Todd Brown
Telluride Town Councilor

Lars Carlson
Telluride Town Councilor

Sean Murphy
Mayor, Town of Telluride

Shannon Bird
Westminster City Councilor

Idaho
Jacob Greenberg
Blaine County Commissioner

Angenie McCleary
Blaine County Commissioner

Lawrence Schoen
Blaine County Commissioner

Nevada
David Bobzien
Reno City Councilor

Jenny Brekhus
Reno City Councilor

New Mexico
Diane Denish
Former Lt. Governor

Tim Eichenberg
State Treasurer

Cynthia Hall
Public Regulation Commissioner, New
Mexico Public Regulation Commission

Tim Keller
State Auditor

Jason Marks
Former Public Regulation
Commissioner, New Mexico Public
Regulation Commission

Bill O'Neill
State Senator

Gerald Ortiz y Pino
State Senator

Benny Shendo, Jr.
State Senator

Liz Stefanics
State Senator

Jeff Steinborn
State Senator

Mimi Stewart
State Senator

Peter Wirth
Majority Floor Leader, State Senate

Daymon Ely
House of Representatives

Joanne Ferrary
House of Representatives

Georgene Louis
House of Representatives

Javier Martinez
House of Representatives

Bill McCamley
House of Representatives

Matt McQueen
House of Representatives

Debbie Sarinana
House of Representatives

Nathan Small
House of Representatives

Liz Thomson
House of Representatives

Maggie Hart Stebbins
Bernalillo County Commissioner

Debbie O'Malley
Bernalillo County Commissioner

Billy G Garrett
Dona Ana County Commissioner

Isaac Benton
Albuquerque City Councilor

Patrick Davis
Albuquerque City Councilor

Rey Garduno
Former Albuquerque City Councilor

Katee McClure
Aztec City Commissioner

Ken Miyagishima
Mayor, City of Las Cruces

Gil Sorg
Las Cruces City Councilor

David Coss
Former Mayor, City of Santa Fe

Javier Gonzales
Mayor, City of Santa Fe

Peter Ives
Santa Fe City Councilor

Joseph Maestas
Santa Fe City Councilor

Renee Villarreal
Santa Fe City Councilor

Steven Green
Mayor, Town of Truth or Consequences

Jody Benson
Former Los Alamos School Board
Member

Utah

Evan Clapper
Grand County Councilor

Rani Derasary
Moab City Councilor

Kalen Jones
Moab City Councilor