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Contact: Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director, gwen@westernleaders.org, 505-469-0380
Jessica Pace, Program Coordinator, jess@westernleaders.org, 615-294-2049

BLM methane rule strong start, must go further to protect communities

"Western Leaders Network appreciates the Biden administration and the Bureau of Land Management for moving this new federal rule to reduce methane waste from the oil and gas sector forward. However, the BLM must go beyond the provisions in this rule and eliminate waste from the routine venting and flaring of gas just as both Colorado and New Mexico have done. Local, tribal and state elected officials across the Interior West urge the BLM to meet the urgency of this moment and eliminate wasteful practices to protect our climate, public health and local economies. Captured methane not only protects taxpayer resources and supports our local economies; it has important co-benefits such as cutting health-hazardous and climate-damaging pollution that affects our air quality, threatens frontline communities and exacerbates the climate crisis."

– Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director

Background

Today, the Bureau of Land Management released a rule to reduce methane and other emissions from the oil and gas sector nationwide, which is essential to protecting frontline communities from health-hazardous pollution and addressing the climate crisis.

With 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years after it reaches the atmosphere, methane is a leading contributor to climate change, which disproportionately impacts BIPOC, rural and low-income communities.

In 2016, BLM implemented a rule with bipartisan congressional support to reduce methane waste, which the Trump administration subsequently rolled back. Since then, the Biden administration has been working to reinstate and strengthen safeguards under the BLM to cut down on methane emissions.