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## **WESTERN LEADERS NETWORK URGES EPA TO ADOPT STRONGEST SAFEGUARDS CONTROLLING CLIMATE-DAMAGING METHANE EMISSIONS**

Western Leaders Network testified before the Environmental Protection Agency today, urging the agency to adopt the strongest safeguards controlling climate-damaging methane emissions from oil and gas operations.

The EPA held public hearings Jan. 10-12 to solicit public comment on the agency's supplemental proposal to reduce methane and other pollutants from oil and gas operations. The agency heard from dozens of organizers, citizens and leaders, including Western Leaders Network Executive Director Gwen Lachelt and Mayor of Ridgway, Colorado, and WLN member, John Clark.

Lachelt, a former two-term Colorado county commissioner and founder and director of Western Leaders Network, testified that local, state and federal agencies must do everything within their power to cut methane pollution from the oil and gas sector. Lachelt commended the EPA's draft rule and urged the agency to go even further to protect public health and mitigate climate change impacts.

"We are all affected by climate-damaging methane emissions from oil and gas, and we deserve the very best protections possible," Lachelt stated. "I urge the EPA to adopt the most robust rules to control methane emissions. Please strengthen the draft rule by requiring that gas associated with oil drilling is captured, expand emission standards to cover a broader range of storage tanks, and allow a clear pathway for community participation in the super emitter response program."

Click [here to read Lachelt's full statement](#).

"I am counting on EPA to do more to limit the wasteful and dangerous practice of routine flaring, better address emissions from storage tanks, and provide a clear pathway for participation in the Super Emitter Response Program," Mayor Clark testified. "From the tragic Marshall Fire that occurred just over a year ago outside my hometown of Boulder, Colorado, to the historic, devastating and deadly flooding that has been plaguing the California coast in recent weeks, we don't need more evidence of the horrific and increasing impacts of climate change. One of our best tools for beginning to turn these impacts around is to reduce methane emissions to the greatest extent possible, and these updated draft rules do just that."

Last November, the EPA released an [updated draft rule](#) to reduce methane emissions and other pollutants from new and existing oil and gas operations. The new proposal builds upon a draft rule released in 2021.

*Western Leaders Network is a coalition of 450 local, tribal, and state-elected officials across the Interior West working to advance climate solutions and conservation initiatives, and protect democracy. WLN leaders represent millions of westerners, many of whom live with oil and gas operations on their ranches and farms, in their backyards and neighborhoods.*