In 2016 the Obama Administration’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) finalized the Methane Waste Prevention Rule that would regulate methane leaking and flaring from natural gas wells on BLM managed public lands. Now, the Trump Administration has been working to eliminate this rule since President Trump took office. Most recently, the BLM issued a new proposed rule that would effectively eliminate any protections against leaking, venting, and flaring of methane. However, courts have also ruled on the immediate implementation of the 2016 rule while a Trump Administration version of their new rule is formulated. Join us in urging Secretary Zinke and the BLM to implement the 2016 Rule as is.

BLM Methane Waste Rule

The 2016 BLM Methane Waste Rule aims to reduce the amount of methane that is leaked, flared, or vented from natural gas wells on BLM managed public lands. It has been found that oil and gas companies waste $330 million worth of natural gas each year due to unregulated leaking, venting, and flaring from wells. Additionally, taxpayers are losing millions of dollars every year from this wasted natural gas. Not only is this costing taxpayers and nearby western communities significant loss in revenue, but it is allowing the consistent leaking of dangerous emissions into the air. These methane leaks are dangerous for both our atmosphere and human health.

Yet, in December 2017, Secretary Zinke announced that the BLM would postpone implementation of the Methane Waste Rule by one year so that oil and gas companies would not be concerned with costs associated with implementation of a rule that the BLM was intending to rewrite—an announcement welcomed by industry groups.

What's Happening Now?

In February 2018, the BLM released a new proposed rule that would eliminate the conservation and public health requirements that had been updated with the 2016 rule. This
new rule eliminates the 2016 upgrades and reverts back to weak requirements that lead to extreme loss of taxpayer revenue and dangerous emissions of wasted methane. Along with this new proposed rule, the BLM has opened a 60-day public comment period.

What You Can Do

Any new rule addressing methane waste needs to focus on the economic and health impacts methane leaks have on all Americans rather than just preventing a possible financial burden to the oil and gas industry. The Mountain Pact is committed to sustaining mountain communities through support of common sense regulations on public lands such as the 2016 Methane Waste Prevention Rule. If you would like to submit comment that supports the implementation of the 2016 Rule, please click here and follow the link and instructions at the bottom of the page.

Please reach out to us with any questions!

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