February 28, 2017

Dear Senator:

We are writing to express our opposition to a proposal to use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to block rules issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to limit natural gas waste from the oil and gas sector. As elected officials from local governments across the Interior West, we strongly support this recently adopted rule on venting and flaring methane because it will cut natural gas waste on federal and tribal lands, will help ensure a fair return to local governments and the taxpaying public, will put our energy resources to good use, and will clean up our air.

The CRA is a blunt tool that, if successful, would prevent any “substantially similar” rule from being issued, allowing the oil and natural gas industry to continue to waste hundreds of millions of dollars-worth of taxpayer owned resources every year, and use outdated, wasteful technologies.

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 could be used to heat homes, power vehicles, or generate electricity. In fact, enough natural gas is being 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 $23 million annually in royalty revenue for the Federal Government and the States that share it, according to a 2010 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report. Federal royalties are split about evenly between the federal government and the states, and then used to help fund education, infrastructure projects, such as road 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.

- **The rule helps create American jobs.** Efforts to cut methane waste has put American entrepreneurs to work creating innovative, cutting-edge technologies to make it economically feasible for the oil and gas companies achieve reductions. A national rule to cut methane waste on public and tribal lands helps to deepen investment and create more jobs in this industry.
Leading oil and natural gas companies and several states, including Colorado, Wyoming, Ohio and Pennsylvania, 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 two years ago, the state’s oil and gas industry has continued to grow. Colorado’s natural gas production increased about 10 percent, oil production is up 58 percent, and the number of oil and gas wells also increased by more than three percent.

This common sense 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.

We urge your opposition to using the Congressional Review Act to eliminate BLM’s rule to reduce natural gas waste because of the rule’s benefit to our local governments, constituents, and taxpayers.

Sincerely yours,

**Colorado County Commissioners**

Gwen Lachelt
La Plata County Commissioner

Karn Stiegelmeier
Summit County Commissioner

Julie Westendorff
La Plata County Commissioner

Mike Brazell
Park County Commissioner

Jason Anderson
Saguache County Commissioner

Nancy Jackson
Arapahoe County Commissioner

Jill Ryan
Eagle County Commissioner

Eva Henry
Adams County Commissioner

Kathy Chandler-Henry
Eagle County Commissioner

Steve Child
Pitkin County Commissioner

Michael Whiting
Archuleta County Commissioner

Hilary Cooper
San Miguel County Commissioner

Keith Baker
Chaffee County Commissioner

Joan May
San Miguel County Commissioner

Ben Tisdel
Ouray County Commissioner

Kris Holstrom
San Miguel County Commissioner
Cindy Domenico  
Boulder County Commissioner  

Deb Gardner  
Boulder County Commissioner  

Elise Jones  
Boulder County Commissioner  

**Colorado Local Officials**  

Christina Rinderle  
Mayor, City of Durango  

Anita "Sweetie" Marbury  
Councilor, City of Durango  

Richard White  
Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Durango  

Christine Berg  
Mayor, City of Lafayette  

Gustavo Reyna  
Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Lafayette  

Merrily Mazza  
Council Member, City of Lafayette  

Shakti  
Council Member, City of Lakewood  

Polly Christensen  
Council Member, City of Longmont  

Connie Sullivan  
Mayor, Town of Lyons  

Kristopher Larsen  
Mayor, Town of Nederland  

Robin L. Kniech  
Council Member, City of Denver  

Suzanne Jones  
Mayor, City of Boulder  

Sam Weaver  
Council Member, City of Boulder  

Aaron Brockett  
Council Member, City of Boulder  

Liza Morzel  
Council Member, City of Boulder  

Mary Dolores Young  
Council Member, City of Boulder  

John Clark  
Mayor, Town of Ridgway  

Erick Johnson  
Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Ridgway  

Ellen Hunter  
Councilor, Town of Ridgway  

Robb Austin  
Councilor, Town of Ridgway  

Britt Bassett  
Board Member, La Plata Electric Association  

Jeff Berman  
Board Member, La Plata Electric Association  

Jack Turner  
Board Member, La Plata Electric Association  

**Ute Mountain Ute Tribe**  

Regina Lopez Whiteskunk  
Former Tribal Council Member
New Mexico Elected Officials

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Bernalillo County Commissioner

Maggie Hart Stebbins
Bernalillo County Commissioner

Paula Garcia
Mora County Commissioner

George Trujillo
Mora County Commissioner

Anna Hansen
Santa Fe County Commissioner

Javier Gonzales
Mayor, City of Santa Fe

Joseph Maestas
Santa Fe City Council Member

Pat Davis
Albuquerque City Council Member

Katee McClure
Aztec City Commissioner

Senator Linda Lopez
Albuquerque

Senator Bill O’Neill
Albuquerque

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Senator Jeff Steinborn
Las Cruces

Representative Cheryl Williams Stapleton
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Jenny Brekhus
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Kalen Jones
Moab City Council Member