STATEMENT ON BLM METHANE RULE COMMENT PERIOD ENDING

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“The public comment period on the proposed repeal of the BLM methane rule ended this week with more than 400,000 comments opposing the rollback. Earlier this month, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said he decided against steep national park fee increases at the request of thousands of Americans. If Secretary Zinke values public opinion as he says he does, he should again honor the will of the public by keeping the original methane rule in place. Every day that this commonsense rule is not enforced threatens public health and robs local governments of needed revenue.”

– Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director

Background

This week, a 60-day public comment period ended on the proposed rollback of the 2016 Bureau of Land Management Methane Waste Prevention Rule. More than 400,000 submitted comments to BLM with an overwhelming majority opposing the rollback and expressing support for the initial rule, which was developed to curb both air pollution and wasted taxpayer dollars. The agency’s new proposed rule will continue to allow uncaptured methane from oil and gas operations on public lands go to waste. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has ignored requests to hold public hearings on this proposal.

The initial BLM methane rule was finalized in 2016 after an exhaustive public process that included public hearings, multiple comment periods, and buy-in from the oil and gas industry, conservation groups, health experts, farmers and ranchers, and other stakeholders. The rule was created to curb methane pollution from oil and gas production on public lands and address the estimated $330 million in natural gas wasted each year. Federal court judges and the U.S. Senate have blocked multiple attempts by the current administration to delay or repeal the rule.