NEWS RELEASE

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Western Elected Officials Call on Senate to Defend BLM Methane Waste Rule

Rule Protects Public Health and Saves Taxpayer Dollars

Durango, Colorado – More than 60 local elected officials from four western states today called on the United States Senate to defend the Bureau of Land Management's natural gas methane waste rule. The rule was adopted in 2016 and directs the oil and gas industry to capture natural gas that otherwise is wasted by venting and flaring from natural gas wells on the federal mineral estate.

"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," says the letter signed by county commissioners and city councilors from Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. "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."

"This is a common sense rule with widespread bipartisan support among the public," said Gwen Lachelt, a La Plata County commissioner from Durango, Colorado. Colorado College's recent Conservation in the West poll showed over 80% public support for the rule across party lines. "For those of us who live in the heart of a methane hotspot identified by scientists from NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the methane waste rule is an obvious step to clean up our air and one that is easily implemented by industry."

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gas industry to continue to waste hundreds of millions of dollars-worth of taxpayer owned resources every year, and use outdated, wasteful technologies.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 elected officials point out that BLM's rule to reduce methane waste from venting and flaring protects the interests of their western communities and constituents in several 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.

- **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 report.

- **The rule helps clean up our air.** The same technologies that reduce natural gas waste also limit 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.

"This rule is win-win for the public and for industry," said Katee McClure, a city commissioner in Aztec, New Mexico. "We can clean up our air here in the center of the nation's biggest methane cloud, and the oil and gas industry can make money plugging their leaks and eliminating wasted methane."

"The methane waste rule was adopted after several years of public and industry input," said Elise Jones, a Boulder County commissioner from Boulder, Colorado. "The rule protects air quality by reducing methane pollution and protects taxpayers by preventing the waste of valuable natural gas. If senators have concerns about the methane waste rule, they should take a scalpel to it rather than the sledgehammer of the Congressional Review Act."

The elected officials concluded their letter by urging Senate opposition to using the Congressional Review Act to eliminate BLM's rule to reduce natural gas waste because of the rule's benefit to local governments, constituents, and taxpayers.

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