



STATEMENT ON BLM METHANE RULE RESCISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 18, 2018

CONTACT: Jessica Pace, Program Coordinator, jess@westernleaders.org

“Today's decision calls into question what role natural gas will play in our future. If energy companies cannot address methane emissions, how can they expect to compete against cleaner sources of energy that become more and more competitive?”

“It's a sad day when special interests speak louder than common sense and public opinion. Though thousands of Americans from a variety of backgrounds and livelihoods support the BLM methane rule, today Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke chose to roll back the rule and therefore do nothing to address air pollution or wasted taxpayer dollars, both of which are byproducts of uncaptured methane. Western states are not on an even playing field when it comes to protections against wasted natural gas on federal and tribal lands. While some like Colorado are leading the nation with statewide regulations on methane emissions, others like New Mexico and Utah are still catching up. Moreover, the largest methane cloud in North America – linked to oil and gas activity – hovers over the Four Corners region in the southwest with no means of redress.

“Not only would the methane rule have meant a sweeping improvement for air quality across the nation, local governments also would have been able to collect on millions of dollars' worth of natural gas that currently goes to waste each year on public lands. Leaked, vented and flared methane is a preventable problem, and the solution is attainable. Gutting this commonsense rule after so much work to develop and defend it disrespects our public processes, threatens public health, and robs western communities of much-needed revenues.”

– Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director

Background

Today, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management finalized the rescission of the Obama-era Methane Waste and Prevention Rule regulating methane emissions from oil and gas operations. Completed in 2016, the rule was developed to curb methane venting, leaking and flaring on federal and tribal lands through a set of standards for oil and gas companies. An estimated \$330 million in natural gas is wasted each year on public lands. Developed through an extensive public process that included multiple comment periods, hearings and stakeholder meetings, the rule had buy-in from the energy industry as well as environmentalists, elected officials, health experts, farmers and ranchers, and others who share publicly owned lands with oil and gas.

Western Leaders Network

1309 East 3rd Avenue • Suite 22 • Post Office Box 4433 • Durango, Colorado 81302

970-317-4264 • westernleaders.org