

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 10, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Last year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) finalized rules to reduce methane wasted by the oil and natural gas sector on public lands and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized standards to reduce methane and other harmful air pollutants from new and modified oil and gas facilities nationwide. This month, these agencies each took actions to suspend these important safeguards. These actions are unwarranted and will harm public health, taxpayers, and our energy security.

The BLM and EPA rules were adopted after years of deliberation and numerous opportunities for public input. More than one million people weighed in supporting these agency efforts.

On July 3, 2017, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals ruled that the EPA could not suspend the rules consistent with the Clean Air Act and new and modified oil and gas facilities must begin reducing methane emissions and other toxic air pollutants in accordance with the rules. The court noted that industry not only had ample opportunity to comment on the rule, but that the EPA had incorporated industry comments into the final rule.

On July 5, 2017, the States of California and New Mexico have filed suit against BLM in the Northern District of California raising the same type of objections to BLM's suspension of its methane rule.

Earlier, on May 10, 2017, the U.S. Senate rejected an attempt under the Congressional Review Act to nullify BLM's rule. That vote demonstrated that there is not support in Congress for rolling back these protections for our environment, American taxpayers, and public health. The American public broadly supports preventing the unnecessary waste of public resources, as required by the Mineral Leasing Act, and reducing air pollution associated with oil and gas development.

Suspending commonsense regulations to reduce waste and stop air pollution needlessly poses health and safety risks on children and our most vulnerable citizens. The BLM and EPA rules each rely on proven, widely available, and cost effective technologies to reduce leaking, venting, and flaring, and keep natural gas in production and in commerce rather than in the air. Delaying or revising these rules will only cause additional and unnecessary waste and result in substantial harm to communities across the country that will be exposed to dangerous air pollution. For the EPA to take action that will result in children being exposed to harmful oil and gas well emissions for at least two additional years in order to give the oil and gas industry a windfall is antithetical to the agency's core mission.

Over the last several years, industry compliance with regulations limiting methane and other air pollutants by EPA, BLM, and several states has demonstrated that companies can cost effectively prevent the waste of important energy resources and reduce air pollution that threatens our communities and our climate. Reuters reviewed recent Security Exchange Commission filings and found that "13 of the 15 biggest U.S. oil and gas producers said that compliance with current regulations is not impacting their operations or their financial condition." And, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, oil and gas industry employment has steadily increased since the rules took effect, even in the face of flat and declining oil prices. The Baker Hughes U.S. rig count identified over 900 land rigs in operation in June, 2017 -- up from 558 when the BLM rule was finalized in November, 2016, representing more than a 50% increase.

Both the EPA and BLM rules are commonsense, cost effective requirements that direct the oil and gas industry to find and fix leaks, use up-to-date readily available equipment, and prevent waste of a natural resource -- saving taxpayers money while also reducing air pollution and protecting human health. These requirements drive innovation and increase jobs in the growing sector of methane detection and capture technologies.

We urge you to fully implement the EPA and BLM methane and air pollution regulations as legally required without delay and to keep these important protections for public health, American taxpayers, and our energy security in place.

Sincerely,



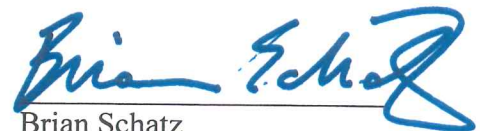
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United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
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Edward J. Markey
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Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



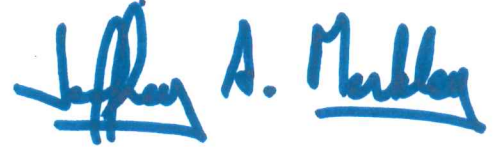
Al Franken
United States Senator



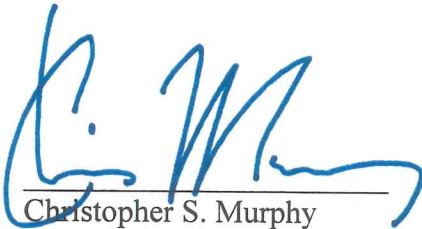
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



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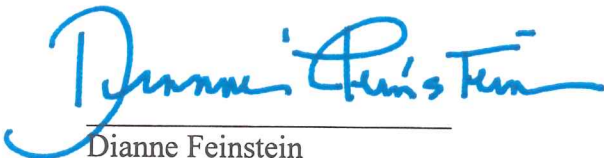
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



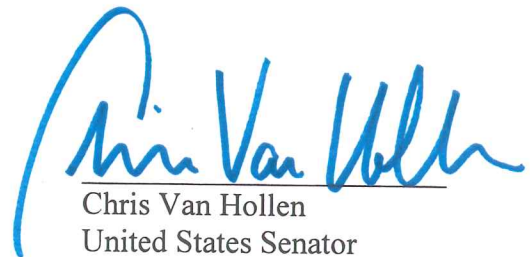
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator




Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



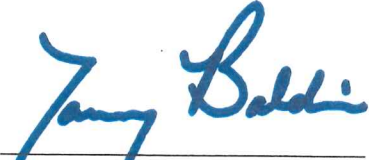
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



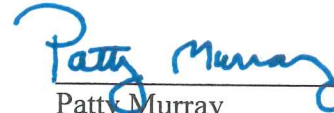
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United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
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Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Senator Tom Carper

Cc:

Secretary Ryan Zinke, U.S. Department of the Interior

Administrator G. Scott Pruitt, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency