

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to raise concern at the inadequate measures the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is taking to solicit public input and feedback on the recent proposal to revise the Methane Waste and Prevention rule. To ensure a thorough review, we request that BLM immediately schedule public hearings, particularly in the West, where the bulk of drilling activity on federal lands occurs. We also request the public comment period for this rule be extended from the proposed 60 days to 90 days.

It is especially important to afford the public the opportunity to review the proposal given the implications to American taxpayers. By the BLM's own admission, the new proposal will cost Americans more than \$1 billion dollars in wasted natural gas and pollution in addition to tens of millions of dollars in royalty revenues to the Treasury.

We hope the BLM will provide the same level of public input that went into creation of the 2016 Methane Waste Prevention rule. At that time, BLM held more than half a dozen public meetings across the West and ultimately extended the comment period by several weeks at the request of industry to allow more time for review. During this extensive outreach and public involvement effort, BLM received strong support for its proposal from a wide variety of stakeholders and the public, including:

- More than 330,000 individuals and group comments received during the 2016 comment period – the vast majority of which supported a strong rule.
- An overwhelming number of supportive comments at public hearings in Farmington, NM, Oklahoma City, OK, Lakewood, CO and Dickinson, ND. In the final tally, testimony in support of the BLM methane waste rule outnumbered opposition by more than 3-to-1 margins.
- The Navajo Nation President, the Navajo Northern Agency Council, Navajo Chapter Houses, the Three Affiliated Tribes Business Council, the Turtle Mountain Tribal Council, and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council, who all supported action by the BLM to cut methane waste.
- More than 80 local elected officials—including Republicans, Democrats, and independents from across the West—all of whom signed letters or passed resolutions in support of the BLM methane waste rule.
- Business groups, methane mitigation companies, Latino organizations, agricultural groups, sportsmen groups, more than 60 public health experts, clean air advocacy organizations, and taxpayer organizations, all of whom also backed the BLM rule.

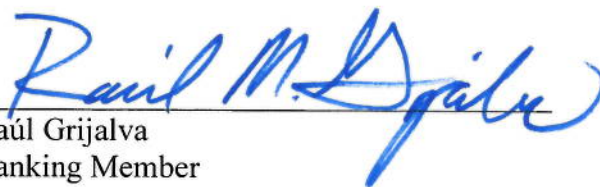
After the rule was finalized, a bipartisan poll found an overwhelming majority – fully 75 percent – of Westerners supported retaining rules to cut oil and gas waste on America’s public lands, including a majority of Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike.

Waste of taxpayer-owned natural gas is a significant fiscal issue on public and tribal lands. We call on BLM to address this problem by maintaining the 2016 methane waste rule and by undertaking extensive public outreach in considering any changes to this rule.

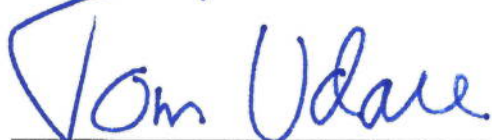
Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member



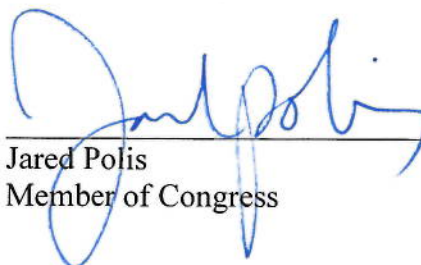
Tom Udall
United States Senator



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress