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## **Western groups react to EPA proposal to lessen protections against oil and gas methane pollution**

*Billings, Mont.* — The following organizations have issued statements responding to release of proposed rules to roll back oil and gas methane pollution standards by the Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler’s [Environmental Protection Agency](#):

“I see venting, flaring, and leaks of natural gas every day on the Fort Berthold Reservation, where I live. I know that our air is polluted from oil and gas extraction. I see how much gas is wasted and have experienced health effects from the emissions. I know firsthand that the rules we have now are strong enough to protect our health, environment, and lessen the impacts to our climate.

“Our tribal communities are directly impacted by the Methane Rule. It is our people who breathe in the toxins that can be prevented from spilling into our atmosphere. It is our children, my grandchildren, that are breathing it in. How can this be allowed to continue? The rule that is being rolled back is strong but achievable by the industry. We will continue to fight for it to go into effect.”

- ***Lisa DeVille, Chair of Fort Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights and Board Member of the Dakota Resource Council, Mandaree, N.D.***

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“Andrew Wheeler’s actions today directly threaten public health. Rolling back these protections—and allowing the EPA to disregard methane pollution when it could be fixed—is a reckless political ploy.

“As Montanans and Americans, we all deserve better. Ending methane pollution is not only the right thing to do, it’s also the smart thing to do to protect our health and the health of our agricultural economy. But Acting Administrator Wheeler’s decision today puts polluters ahead of people.”

- ***Sue Beug, Northern Plains Resource Council member, landowner, and retired small business owner in Carbon County, Montana***

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“It is a sad day when EPA rescinds a rule and now will allow the oil and gas industry to continue to pollute our air and either burn off or release valuable natural gas as a consequence. In addition to methane, other hazardous air

pollutants that create ozone and are detrimental to people's health will be released. This practice is wasteful as well as harmful to our air quality.

“Wyoming was the first state to implement leak detection and repair rules in the Pinedale area and the first to adopt the EPA rules. We hope Wyoming will lead the way again and adopt statewide leak detection and repair rules in the very near future, wisely limiting the waste of a valuable resource and preventing harmful pollution.”

- ***Wayne Lax, Powder River Basin Resource Council Board Member, Cheyenne, Wyoming***

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“Where companies should be very proactive about waste, leakage, lost revenue, safety, and not need rules, they often find some consideration to avoid proper practice. Rescinding rules that were found to be necessary because companies would not self-adhere to the best practices, should not be done for the sake of just rescinding. These rules have been ‘paying for themselves’ by cutting waste, leakage, and saving product for sale, fewer accidents, and less harmful pollution.

“Colorado enacted its own rules because of these proven problems with statewide rules and served as a model for both EPA and Bureau of Land Management rules against these dangerous, unhealthy, sloppy, and shoddy practices that are not cost effective, but are harmful and wasteful.”

- ***Robert Arrington, P.E., Western Colorado Alliance Board Member and Garfield County Colorado Energy Advisory Board Member, Parachute, Colo.***

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“The EPA’s current rules minimize unnecessary emissions to our air and protect the public from air toxins that damage citizens health and from methane that causes global warming. Oil and gas production and processing equipment emit both these toxins and methane, and both can be minimized using currently available technology. The proposal to weaken these rules allows the industry to relax its control of these emissions. Since the currently-available control technology has already been in use in parts of the country, and proven to be economical, this relaxation at the behest of industry is solely to increase profits and speed natural gas development at the expense of the public’s health and the global climate.”

- ***Rodger Steen, Western Organization of Resource Councils’ Oil and Gas Campaign Team Chair, Steamboat Springs, Colo.***

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