

March 23, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

BLM Methane and Waste Prevention Rule and Protecting Latino Communities

Dear U.S. Senators of the 115th Congress,

We write to insist on the protection of the BLM Methane and Waste Prevention Rule. It is the right of Latinos in America to live in environmentally safe and economically vibrant communities. The BLM Methane and Waste Prevention Rule will help to ensure our communities have clean air, our natural resources are managed responsibly, and American taxpayers see a fair share of returns. We urge you to reconsider the use of the Congressional Review Act to nullify the rule; if successful, the brash repercussions of the “substantially the same” clause of the Act will heavily burden Latinos.

We know that Latinos are disproportionately affected by the health impacts of oil and gas development. The most recent report by the National Hispanic Medical Association and LULAC, *Latino Communities At Risk: The Impact of Air Pollution from the Oil and Gas Industry* found that “The air in many Latino communities violates air quality standards for ozone. More than one in four people in the U.S. live in areas that violate the federal air pollution standard for ozone. This includes over 23 million Latinos- more than one in three Latinos in the U.S. Many Latino communities face an elevated risk of cancer due to toxic air emissions from oil and gas development.”

As American taxpayers, Latinos expect our public resources to be used in productive, cost-effective ways that help to raise the overall standard of living for all Americans. We believe that the BLM Methane and Waste Prevention Rule would prevent up to \$330 million in wasted finite natural resources annually and raise up to \$27 million a year in royalties paid to oil and gas producing states and the treasury, and increase access to jobs in methane mitigation.

The BLM Methane Rule is a win for the American public, protecting our health and ensuring the productive use of our natural resources. A vote against the CRA is a declaration that the 1.81 million Latinos who live within a half mile of existing oil and gas facilities deserve to breathe clean air and that the U.S. should be a leader in limiting this dangerous waste.

The process for drafting the BLM Methane Rule was transparent and fair; over 300,000 people commented in favor of the rule, which followed the request of the Government Accountability Office and DOI Office of Inspector General to revise outdated rules governing methane collection. It is important that the Senate respect the authority of the BLM and the process it took to engage stakeholders during the writing and review process. We urge you to let the BLM Methane rule stand and put to the interests of Americans, especially the Latino community, over the private interests of the oil and gas industry.

Sincerely,

Maite Arce
President & CEO
Hispanic Access Foundation

Brent A. Wilkes
National Executive Director
League of United Latin American Citizens

Dr. Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, FACP
President & CEO
National Hispanic Medical Association

Ernesto Vargas
National Director
Chispa - League of Conservation Voters

Camilla Simon
Executive Director
Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO)

Laura M. Esquivel
Director of National Advocacy
Hispanic Federation

Mark Magana
President & CEO
GreenLatinos

Adrianna Quintero
Founder and Executive Director
Voces Verde

Ben Monterroso
Executive Director
Mi Familia Vota

Jess Torres
Deputy Communications Director
Latino Victory Fund

Juan Almanza
Nevada Leader
Por La Creacion - Faith Based Alliance

Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš
Founder & Executive Director
Azul

Gabe Vasquez
Founder
Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project -New Mexico

Randy Ertll
Executive Director
California Latino Environmental Advocacy Network - CLEAN

Antonio Gonzalez
President
The William C. Velasquez Institute

Angel Pena
Small Business Owner
Outback a' Horseback

Demis Foster
Executive Director
Conservation Voters New Mexico Education Fund

Jose Gonzalez
Founder
Latino Oudoors