

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 19, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Steve Pearce
Director
Bureau of Land Management
U.S Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum and Director Pearce,

We write to express our strong opposition to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed rule to overturn the 2024 *Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation* rule (the "2024 Waste Prevention Rule"). Reversing these common-sense standards will waste publicly owned natural gas, cost the American people tens of millions in foregone revenue, and increase pollution on our public lands.

Between 2012 and 2021, operators lost an estimated 300 billion cubic feet of natural gas on federal lands to flaring and venting, valued at nearly \$950 million, and resulting in a loss of between \$76 and \$135 million in potential taxpayer revenue¹. Routine venting and flaring of natural gas is unnecessary and harmful, turning natural gas into a waste product instead of a valuable energy commodity.

In addition to creating this financial loss, rolling back the 2024 Waste Prevention Rule would reduce our domestic energy supply and expose nearby communities to avoidable health risks. Methane is a greenhouse gas over 20 times as powerful as carbon dioxide. In addition to methane, the primary component of natural gas, venting and flaring releases volatile organic compounds that are carcinogenic, increase ground-level ozone, and lead directly to illness for both individuals and communities exposed.

¹ <https://www.taxpayer.net/energy-natural-resources/gas-giveaways-ii-methane-waste-on-federal-lands-is-business-as-usual/>

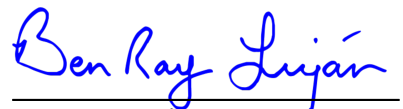
Many states across the country have already demonstrated that limiting venting and flaring is compatible with robust energy production. Colorado adopted regulations in 2020 and New Mexico in 2021 that ended almost all venting and flaring. In addition, many major oil and gas producers have voluntarily agreed to avoid routine flaring on new wells by 2030. Furthermore, cost-effective technologies to detect and reduce methane waste, such as satellite monitoring, drones, and infrared cameras, are widely used across the oil and gas industry. Reversing the 2024 Waste Prevention Rule would prolong years of regulatory uncertainty, penalizing proactive operators that have invested in efficient operations while rewarding those that have not.

We strongly urge BLM to reject this proposed rescission and maintain the 2024 Waste Prevention rule. The oil and gas resources on these lands belong to the American public and Tribal nations, and they deserve to benefit from the full value and benefits of responsible resource stewardship.

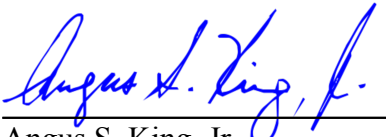
Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



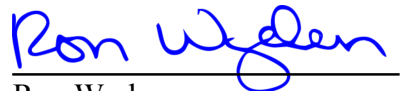
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



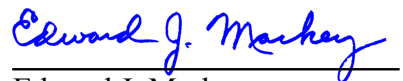
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



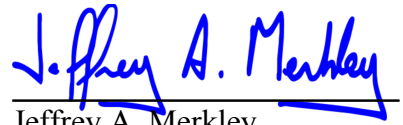
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator