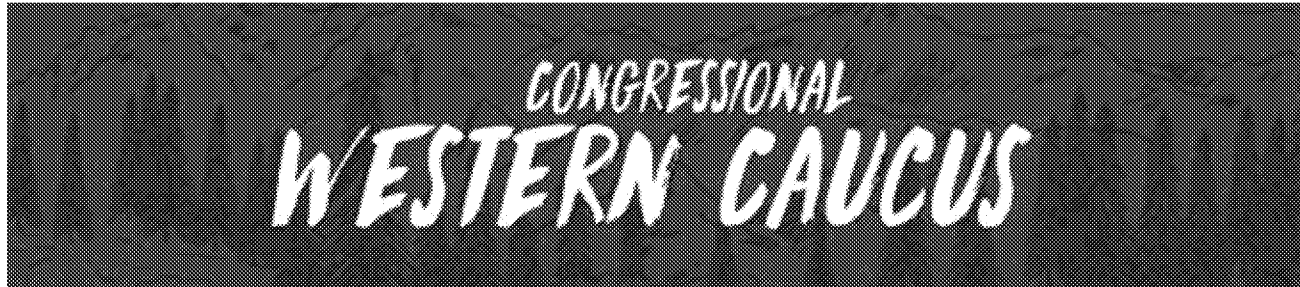


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For Immediate Release
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Date: February 13, 2018
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BLM Moves to Scrap Venting and Flaring Rule



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, and Western Caucus Members **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**, **Brian Babin (TX-36)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** and **Kevin Cramer (ND-AL)** released the following statements after the Bureau of Land Management announced it was issuing a proposed rule to effectively rescind the Obama BLM's 2016 Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation Rule, also known as the Venting and Flaring Rule:

Congressman Gosar said, "The Obama Administration's costly Venting and Flaring rule was an affront to states' rights, aimed to stifle responsible energy production on federal lands and yielded no real environmental benefit at the cost of good-paying jobs. Accordingly, I applaud the BLM and Secretary Zinke for doing the right thing for our country's ascending energy dominance by scrapping this egregious overreach by the previous administration. Their actions on this front are in line with President Trump's directive to eliminate unnecessary regulations that pose real threats to our economic security."

"The previous administration scorned domestic energy development and crafted the prior rule to deliberately stifle it. This is a necessary step to promote investment in federal and tribal lands so that economies in the west can grow. We will continue to work in coordination with Secretary Zinke, the Trump administration, states and tribal communities to advance new and better policies," said **Congressman Bishop**.

"The impacts of BLM's Obama-era venting and flaring rule would be devastating to the economy of New Mexico, which relies on the production of energy resources for thousands of jobs along with roughly 30-40% of the State's operating funds," said **Congressman Pearce**. "The full implementation of this rule would directly threaten funding for schools, teachers, hospitals, law enforcement, and other essential services our communities rely on. I appreciate the Secretary's commitment to improving this rule and look forward to working with the Department to move these necessary reforms forward."

Congressman Lamborn stated, "The Trump Administration and Secretary Zinke are taking bold action for responsible land management reform. No longer will unnecessary burdens and requirements stifle what's best for our Western lands. This move promotes strong energy development and economic growth. I'll continue to support smart policies like these."

"I commend Interior Secretary Zinke for taking this important step to end yet another onerous Obama era rule, which raised costs for Americans and made us less competitive. This Venting and Flaring Rule placed high costs on American employers and hindered economic growth. The tens of thousands of petrochemical workers in the 36th district of Texas will be the beneficiaries of this decision," said **Congressman Babin**.

Congressman LaMalfa said, "The venting and flaring rule replaced proven, responsible energy production guidelines with regulations that frequently overlap with existing state rules that have effectively managed waste prevention for decades. It's just another example of the unnecessary expansion of the regulatory state under the Obama Administration. This rule would be harmful for American energy independence and restrict our economy. I'm happy to see that the Administration is taking steps to scrap this rule and promote responsible American energy production."

"Senate Democrats killed the historical opportunity to permanently rid North Dakota of the federal mediocrity that is the venting and flaring rule," concluded **Congressman Cramer**. "I appreciate the Administration's intentions - with the many problems associated with Obama's rule, I look forward to closely studying its proposed replacement. It is my hope it addresses North Dakota's issues, as we have expressed both to Interior and to the federal courts. Methane is a commodity, and facilitating its economical transfer to the market is the solution."

Background:

Courtesy of the Department of the Interior:

As part of President Trump’s Executive Order 13783 promoting energy independence [Section 7 (6)(iv)] from March 28, 2017, to review and modify federal regulations that unnecessarily hinder economic growth and energy development, the Bureau of Land Management today announced a proposal to revise the 2016 final Waste Prevention Rule (also known as the venting and flaring rule). The proposed rule would eliminate duplicative regulatory requirements and re-establish long-standing requirements that the 2016 final rule sought to replace. The proposal includes a 60-day opportunity for public comment.

“In order to achieve energy dominance through responsible energy production, we need smart regulations not punitive regulations,” **said Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**. “We believe this proposed rule strikes that balance and will allow job growth in rural America.”

Among the concerns identified was that the economic impact on operators was underestimated in the 2016 rule. In addition, a review of existing state and federal regulations found considerable overlap with the rule.

As a result, the BLM is proposing to replace the venting and flaring rule with requirements similar to those that were in force prior to the 2016 final rule. This proposal would align the regulations with administration priorities on energy development, job creation and reduced compliance costs while also working more closely with existing state regulatory efforts.

In an earlier part of this effort, the BLM published a final rule entitled, “Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation; Delay and Suspension of Certain Requirements,” which suspended or delayed certain requirements of the 2016 final rule until Jan. 17, 2019. The rule, finalized on Dec. 8, ensured that operators on federal and Indian oil and gas leases would not expend their resources on complying with the requirements of the 2016 rule that the BLM is today proposing to replace.

The BLM’s proposal supports the administration’s priorities that require agencies to seek ways to reduce the costs of regulatory compliance (Executive Order 13771, Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs) and that require the Secretary to reconsider the 2016 final rule (Executive Order 13783, Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth). Secretary Zinke followed up with Secretarial Order No. 3349, American Energy Independence, on March 29, 2017, which among other things, called for review of the 2016 rule.

Courtesy of the Congressional Western Caucus:

The (BLM) Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation Rule – colloquially known as the Venting and Flaring Rule or the BLM Methane Rule – represents one of the Obama Administration’s most egregious abuses of executive power designed to stifle responsible energy production on federal lands. This 2016 Obama rule included numerous administrative and regulatory burdens that are not necessary and would have significantly hindered job creation, energy production and economic growth. Further, the revised analysis by

the Trump Administration found that the Obama rule's compliance costs for industry and implementation costs for the BLM would exceed the rule's benefits by nearly a billion dollars over a ten-year period. Obama's BLM exceeded their statutory authority with this new regulation by attempting to regulate air quality – an authority that by law is vested solely with the EPA. Methane emissions from oil and natural gas have significantly declined in recent decades without the blunt cudgel of duplicative federal regulations - and at a time when oil and gas production in the U.S. has surged.

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