

April 22, 2021

Dear Senator,

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, we ask you to support S.J. Res.14, a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution to rescind the Environmental Protection Agency's rule, "Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources." Finalized in September 2020, this rule eliminated all federal limits to methane pollution from oil and gas production and transportation, and created legal confusion that will undermine future steps to establish standards based on the latest science and available technologies. Methane is a powerful driver of climate change, and we need sensible safeguards to control methane pollution.

The Conservancy's mission is to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends. We know that human-induced climate change is harming communities across the country and around the world, and we must implement commonsense policies to reduce our emissions. Methane, the primary ingredient of natural gas, traps over 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide over the first 20 years after it reaches the atmosphere. This fact makes reducing unnecessary methane emission a significant near-term opportunity and crucial step to putting the U.S. on a pathway to net-zero over the next two decades. Oil and gas extraction, processing and distribution account for roughly 1/3 of U.S. methane emissions. The same leaks that lead to natural gas waste also release toxic and smog-forming pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene, which threaten the health of millions of people living in nearby communities. The benefits to reducing methane pollution are clear.

The oil and gas industry increasingly agrees. Individual companies and consensus-driven trade associations, like the American Petroleum Institute, support federal standards directly regulating methane emissions.¹ Cost-effective tools and off-the-shelf technologies exist to find and plug methane leaks and reduce venting and flaring. Clear, practical standards will support widespread adoption of these tools and practices across the entire industry.

With such broad and diverse support for methane standards and clear benefits to reducing methane emissions, we respectfully ask you to vote for the Congressional Review Act resolution that would overturn the recent elimination of methane standards and restore previous pollution protections. Passing this resolution would pave the way for EPA to move forward with a normal, efficient regulatory process and get reasonable, cost-effective methane regulations back on track.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Lynn Scarlett
Chief External Affairs Officer, The Nature Conservancy

¹ <https://www.api.org/news-policy-and-issues/blog/2021/01/21/api-stands-ready-to-work-with-biden-administration-on-methane-regulation>