

The Cost of BLM's Methane Waste Rule Rollback

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's elimination of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) methane waste rule will **cost Americans around \$1 billion in wasted natural gas and pollution**. Schools and communities will lose funding, public energy resources will be wasted, and communities will experience more smog.

Despite bipartisan opposition in Congress and overwhelming opposition nationwide, the BLM gutted recent reforms and we are now relying on a 40-year-old regulatory framework that is disconnected from our 21st century energy landscape.

Lost production, less revenue

- By BLM's own [count](#)¹, repealing the methane waste rule would **cut natural gas production by 299 billion cubic feet over a decade**,ⁱ enough to heat almost 500,000 homes for a decade.
- And BLM's rollback plan would **cost Americans around \$1 billion in wasted natural gas and pollution**. Its own analysis shows this is a net-negative for the American public.
- States, tribes, and the federal government would also **lose out on tens of millions of dollars in royalty revenue and** could have funded needed infrastructure such as schools and roads.

Fewer jobs, stagnant investment

- In exchange for more wasted energy and less taxpayer revenue BLM's own analysis shows its **rollback will result in no additional job growth**, stating, "*We do not believe that the proposed rule would substantially alter the investment or employment decisions of firms.*"
- However, the rollback will **create uncertainty and threaten the burgeoning methane mitigation industry**. The industry supportsⁱⁱ over 130 companies including 590 manufacturing, sales and support facilities, with company headquarters across 46 states.
- **This decision is out-of-step with where the oil and gas industry is headed**, including major producers such as [Shell](#)ⁱⁱⁱ and ExxonMobil subsidiary [XTO](#),^{iv} who have both recently established methane emission targets and expressed support for regulation.

More pollution and climate emissions

- Secretary Zinke's revisions are a huge step backward, and would result in the **same amount of short-term climate damage as 8.6 million cars** over ten years.
- Oil and gas operations also release **dangerous toxics such as benzene and other ozone-forming pollutants** that can trigger asthma attacks and worsen respiratory disease.

The public wants strong methane rules

- More than a half-million Americans opposed the repeal of the BLM methane waste rule. During the public comment period, the BLM received more than 600,000 comments about this rollback. The Center for Western Priorities conducted an early analysis^v of publicly available comments and found that 99.8% of comments were in opposition to the repeal.
- In addition to general comments, western advocates,^{vi} a bicameral group of over 100 members of Congress,^{vii} local elected officials,^{viii} Latino leaders,^{ix} over 500 faith leaders,^x more than 60 law professors,^{xi} environmental and conservation groups,^{xii} five Navajo Chapter Houses from Utah and New Mexico outdoor businesses,^{xiii} North Dakota tribal groups, and others submitted comments opposing Sec. Zinke's proposed repeal.
- A January 2018 Colorado College poll^{xiv} found that **7-in-10 western voters support methane waste requirements on public lands**

ⁱ https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/Final%20Rule%20-1004-AE53%20-%20%20Ready%20for%20OFR%209.18.18_508%20%281%29.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.edf.org/how-reducing-methane-emissions-creates-jobs>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/shell-to-lay-out-targets-to-manage-methane-emissions-1537138861>

^{iv} <https://www.xtoenergy.com/en-us/responsibility/current-issues/air/xto-energy-methane-emissions-reduction-program>

^v <https://medium.com/westwise/americans-overwhelmingly-tell-ryan-zinke-to-leave-the-methane-waste-rule-alone-1c194f7c15df>

^{vi} <https://www.scribd.com/document/376152798/Western-Voices-Methane-Letter-2018-04-12>

^{vii} https://degette.house.gov/sites/degette.house.gov/files/20180419_Letter_to_Zinke_opposing_BLM_Methane_Waste_Rule_Rescission.pdf

^{viii}

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/589e56be46c3c44d745ac992/t/5acf62e1575d1f0b6edf3dc9/1523540707403/April+12%2C+2018+BLM+Methane+Letter+to+Zinke.pdf>

^{ix} <https://www.hispanicaccess.org/news/latino-organizations-unite-methane-and-waste-prevention-rule/apr-2018>

^x <http://www.methanefacts.org/files/2018/04/download-6.pdf>

^{xi} http://legal-planet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/BLM-Waste-Prevention-Rule-Comment_final.pdf

^{xii} <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=BLM-2018-0001-3325>

^{xiii} <http://publiclandsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Methane-sign-on-letter.pdf>

^{xiv} <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/stateoftherockies/conservationinthwest/>