

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

February 13, 2023

Re: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2021-0317

Dear Administrator Regan:

We urge you to finalize strong limits on methane and other pollutants from new and existing oil and gas operations.

Methane, a greenhouse gas that has more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years in the atmosphere, is a byproduct of oil and gas operations. Methane emissions are aggressively contributing to climate change and worsening its health consequences. Climate change is wreaking havoc on our communities – from more frequent and extreme weather events like hurricanes, flooding and excessive heat, to more intense wildfires and longer allergy seasons. It is also making air pollution worse, leading to immediate health harms.

Alongside methane, emissions of harmful pollutants like volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from oil and gas sites can worsen respiratory diseases, damage the nervous system, cause developmental harm and even cause cancer. VOCs also interact with sunlight, which leads to ground-level ozone pollution, or smog. Everyone is impacted by the air and climate pollution caused by their operations, but people living closest to oil and gas industry operations, including wells, face disproportionate harm from the air pollutants at oil and gas sites.

EPA must finalize standards that require regular monitoring from all sources – including smaller wells – and prohibit the practice of routine flaring. Hundreds of thousands of wells across the country are low-producing wells that emit a disproportionate amount of methane emissions. Requirements for those wells to conduct regular leak monitoring will cut down on some of the rogue emissions of methane that are leaked during the process. The practice of flaring – burning unused product of as waste – emits a host of climate and health-harming pollutants. Banning the practice will provide further reductions in emissions.

We thank EPA for incorporating feedback from concerned communities, stakeholders and individuals into this proposal and urge the quick finalization of stronger limits on pollution from new, reconstructed and modified oil and gas wells and equipment and standards for existing sources.

Sincerely,

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