

April 20, 2021
President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As organizations that care about public health as well as the fate of our planet's climate, we write to strongly urge you to direct the Environmental Protection Agency to immediately use the full power of sections 111(b) and 111(d) of the Clean Air Act to reduce methane air pollution from new and existing sources of oil and gas development by 65% by 2025. While the best and most just solution to the climate crisis is to transition away from fossil fuels and embrace a clean energy economy, utilizing the full power of the Clean Air Act now will reduce harm to frontline communities living with oil and gas development and help curb further global warming.

The best way to curb air pollution from fossil fuel development is to leave it in the ground. We must transition as quickly as possible away from our dependence on fossil fuels and fully embrace a new renewable energy economy. Continued reliance on fossil fuels, including natural gas, threatens the health of communities living with fossil fuel development and contributes to climate change, which threatens our planet's future. Even with the best regulations in place, oil and gas facilities will continue to pollute, and continued reliance on these energy sources will put us on a path toward a dangerously warmer planet.

But, until we manage the decline of fossil fuels and transition to a cleaner, more equitable energy system, we urge your Administration to do anything and everything to protect human health and the environment from the destructive impacts of oil and gas development. We thank you for recognizing the need to review President Trump's methane rollback as part of your Executive Order to tackle the climate crisis. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must use its authority under the Clean Air Act to develop methane regulations for the oil and gas sector that will reduce emissions by 65%. Directly regulating methane will also help capture smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which trigger asthma attacks and aggravate respiratory conditions like bronchitis, as well as hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) such as benzene and formaldehyde, known human carcinogens.

Methane, the principal component of natural gas, is over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20 year time period. The best science shows that methane pollution from oil and gas facilities in the United States is far worse than current, self-reported estimates suggest. Recent studies found methane emissions levels to be 60% greater than currently estimated by the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, as noted above, smog-causing VOCs and toxic HAPs, including cancer-causing agents, are released in significant quantities throughout the oil and gas development process, through transmission to end use, even if that end use is overseas. Ozone smog from oil and gas industry pollution is associated with 1.1 million summertime asthma attacks in children, and over 9 million people face a cancer risk that

exceeds EPA's one-in-a-million threshold level of concern due to emissions from oil and gas facilities.

To reiterate, merely reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas industry will not make drilling and fracking safe, or natural gas "clean." Fossil fuel development is inherently risky and puts communities and our planet in jeopardy, beyond the harmful air pollution it produces. Despite the fact that oil and gas wastes often contain hazardous and even radioactive properties, it is exempt from our federal hazardous waste law, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. And, hydraulic fracturing poses a threat to drinking water resources because of the "Halliburton loophole" that exempts it from the Safe Drinking Water Act. An immediate shift to renewable energy is the only way we can protect our health, land and water, as well as achieve climate justice.

The oil and gas industry must be held to the same standards as other major industries while we work as a nation to swiftly transition to a truly clean energy economy. Even when there are modestly protective laws on the books, they are rarely enforced. Regulators defer to industry needs over the well-being of surrounding communities. Without substantial resources for enforcement, including means of ensuring legitimate accountability from the industry, communities will continue to be placed last in the industry's list of priorities, which harms both present and future populations.

Building back better means building back fossil fuel free. We must couple strong methane regulations to control air pollution from oil and gas development with throwing the full weight of our resources behind decarbonizing our economy to address the climate crisis. Stopgap measures like methane pollution standards will reduce climate pollution and protect communities in the short term, until this country makes the necessary transition away from dirty, dangerous fossil fuels.

Sincerely,

198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Charlotte
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley
350 Eugene
350 New Hampshire
350 New Orleans
350 Pensacola
350 Santa Fe
350 Tacoma
350 Everett WA
350 Hawaii
350 Kishwaukee (Illinois)
350 PDX

Adorers of the Blood of Christ
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
BCMAC
Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community (BCMAC)
Beyond Extreme Energy
Buckeye Environmental Network
Center for Civic Policy
Center for Human Rights and Environment (CHRE)
CITIZEN
Clean Air Council
Clean Energy Now Texas
Clean Water Action
Climate Action Rhode Island-350
Climate Advocates Voces Unidas (CAVU)
Climate Reality Project
Climate Reality Project of Coastal Georgia
Communities First--Sewickley Valley
Congregation of Saint Joseph
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Counselor Chapter Health Committee
Dakota Resource Council
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Daughters of Wisdom US Province
Denton Climate Awareness Group
Diné Citizens Against Ruining our Environment
Dogwood Alliance
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earth Guardians
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Earth Justice Action Team
Environment America
Environment Texas
Extinction Rebellion
Extinction Rebellion Houston
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
Frack-Free Frostburg (Maryland)
FracTracker Alliance
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Friends of the Earth

Grassroots Coalition
Green America
Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy
Healthy Gulf
High Tide Foundation
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Indigenous People of the Coastal Bend
Inland Ocean Coalition
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Interfaith Power & Light
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Irving Impact
Jews of the Earth
League of Conservation Voters
Liveable Arlington
Los Padres ForestWatch
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Mountain Maryland Movement
Mountain Maryland Movement
National Parks Conservation Association
NEOGAP (Network for Oil and Gas Accountability and Protection)
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
New Mexico Sportsmen
New Mexico Sportsmen
Nine Mile Run Watershed Association
NM Environmental Law Center
North Fork Ranch LOA
Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation, Sisters of Charity of New York
Oxfam America
Pacific Environment
PASUP (Pittsburghers Against Single Use Plastics)
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Project CoffeeHouse
PSARA
PSR Pennsylvania
Rachel Carson Council
Responsible Drilling Alliance
Rio Grande Indivisible, NM
Rio Grande Indivisible, NM
Rio Grande International Study Center
Rochester MN Franciscan
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper
School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic Midwest Province

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Servants of Mary: U.S./Jamaica Community
Sierra Club
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur EW
Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States
Sisters of St Francis of the Neumann Communities.
Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, PA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA
Sisters, Servants of IHM
SNJM
Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project
St Paul's Monastery
Subra Company
Sustainable Obtainable Solutions
Texas Grass Roots Network
The Evangelical Environmental Network
The Ohio Environmental Council
The Wilderness Society
Turtle Island Restoration Network
United 4 Clean Energy
United Methodist Women
Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
Waterkeeper Alliance
West Texas Wind
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Leaders Network
Western Watersheds Project
Wheaton Franciscans JPIC Office

CC:

White House National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy
Deputy White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi
EPA Administrator Michael Regan