

GreenLatinos - Hispanic Access Foundation - Hispanic Federation - Verde -
National Hispanic Medical Association - Ocean Futures Society - Mujeres de la Tierra -
Earth Ethics, Inc. - Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project - Sachamama - Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance -
Juntos: Our Air, Our Water, CVNMEF - The City Project - Nature for All - The Praxis Project - The CLEO
Institute - Chispa, LCV - Rose Foundation for Communities & the Environment - Racially Just Utah -
EcoMadres - PROTÉGETE - Center for Civic Policy - Voto Latino

December 13, 2018

Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

**Re: Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources
Reconsideration; Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0483**

Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler,

We, the undersigned organizations, who are deeply invested in the public health and environmental well-being and justice of Latinxs communities write to express our support of maintaining the 2016 New Source Performance Standards for the oil and gas industry, which provides regulations under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Air Act to help combat climate change and reduce air pollution that harms public health.

The reduction of harmful air pollution and actions to combat climate change under the 2016 New Source Performance Standards would directly improve the health and well-being of Latinx communities across the country who are among the first and worst impacted by climate change and unhealthy air quality, both of which are exacerbated by pollution from the oil and gas industry.

The EPA's mission is to "protect human health and the environment,"¹ however we believe that the current proposal seeks to do the opposite by putting the interests of the oil and gas industry ahead of human health and the environment as it seeks to "significantly decrease unnecessary burdens on domestic energy producers."² Latinx communities across the country know first-hand the burdens that the oil and gas industry impose on our communities with the pollution released by their work.

When natural gas, primarily in the form of methane, is released into the air, so too are harmful pollutants such as benzene and other ozone-forming pollutants, which are linked to cancer and chronic illnesses and that have a disproportionate impact on the health and well-being of our communities. As of 2015, 1.81 million Latino individuals lived within a half mile of an oil and gas facility—those within this half mile radius have cause for concern about potential health impacts from oil and gas toxic air pollution. The air in

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/our-mission-and-what-we-do>

² <https://www.epa.gov/controlling-air-pollution-oil-and-natural-gas-industry/proposed-improvements-2016-new-source>

many Latinx communities violates air quality standards for ozone. Poor air quality results in 750,000 summertime asthma attacks in children and 500,000 missed school days. Among adults, this pollution results in 2,000 asthma related emergency room visits and 600 hospital admissions and 1.5 million reduced activity days.³

Additionally, the EPA's current methane rule helps Latinxs and Americans across the country who are experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change that are exacerbated by pollution from the oil and gas industry. A recent Latino Decisions poll study found that more than half of Latinos (65%) say they have personally experienced the effects of climate change within the last five years.⁴ A Yale University study found that 74% of Latinos would like to see President Trump and his administration, including the EPA, do more to address climate change.⁵ Climate change is destroying our communities and homes whether it be intense flooding due to hurricanes in Texas and North Carolina or the more than 3,000 deaths due to the impacts of Hurricane Maria to the American people of Puerto Rico.

This is why addressing methane pollution from the oil and gas industry is so important. Solutions to cut methane emissions are readily available and highly cost effective, and they will help save a valuable American energy source while protecting our health and mitigating the impacts of climate change on Latinxs and all Americans.

Weakening these common sense, cost-effective oil and gas pollution standards will hurt the communities where these developments exist and ignore the EPA's responsibility to protect the health and safety of American families. We call on EPA to maintain and fully implement the 2016 New Source Performance Standards and reject any proposals to weaken or roll back these standards.

Sincerely,

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³ http://www.catf.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CATF_Pub_LatinoCommunitiesAtRisk.pdf

⁴ http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/3315/4178/7503/EDF_Xtab_2018.pdf

⁵ Leiserowitz, A., Cutler, M., & Rosenthal, S. (2017). Climate Change in the Latino Mind. Yale University. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

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