

Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania, NW
Washington, DC 20460

December 17, 2018

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

As religious leaders we urge you to keep the Environmental Protection Agency's methane pollution standards in place. Methane is a major contributor to climate change, traps 86 times more heat than carbon dioxide, and methane pollution can be detrimental to the health of those who live near natural gas extraction sites.

In 2016, the EPA implemented the New Source Performance Standards, which required national gas and oil companies to reduce methane leaks on both private and public lands. We are opposed to any new EPA proposal that would weaken these regulations. **It is our moral responsibility to do all we can, as soon as we can, to prevent methane waste, protect the health of most vulnerable, and safeguard God's creation.**

Our communities understand that stakes are high for our health and climate, so take the fate of this rule seriously. Our religious communities seek a healthy and abundant future for the families and children we serve. Leaking oil and gas operations contribute to asthma, cancer, and other health problems in nearby communities. Illnesses contribute to missed work and school days.

We are not only committed to protecting vulnerable populations but also caring for God's created world. The most significant source of methane emissions are oil and gas operations, which also emit other dangerous pollutants that harm our communities' health, including smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and cancer-causing pollutants like benzene.

We look to EPA to deliver strong methane pollution standards in order to cut emissions of toxic air pollutants and protect human health.

We have a moral obligation to protect God's gift of air for current and future generations. Easing the pollution standards on methane fails to uphold the common good.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director
Creation Justice Ministries

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Senior Pastor
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