

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,

Shantha Ready Alonso  
Executive Director  
Creation Justice Ministries

Bishop Carroll Baltimore  
Senior Pastor  
International Community Baptist Churches, USA

Dr. Timothy T. Boddie  
General Secretary  
Progressive National Baptist Convention

Rev. Carol L Devine  
Minister for Green Chalice  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Karen Donahue, RSM  
Justice Team  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community  
Omaha, Nebraska

The Reverend Jimmie R. Hawkins  
Director  
Office of Public Witness, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Rev. Susan Hendershot  
President  
The Regeneration Project  
Interfaith Power & Light

Sister Maria Klosowski, RSM  
Leadership Team  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community  
Omaha, Nebraska

Sister Janet Korn, RSM  
Justice Coordinator  
Buffalo and Rochester Sisters of Mercy

Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston  
Disciples Center for Public Witness

Sister Peg Maloney, RSM  
Leadership Team  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community  
Omaha, Nebraska

Sister Patricia Moriarty, RSM  
Sisters of Mercy Northeast Community  
Community Leadership Team Justice Liaison

Sr. Aine O'Connor  
Institute Leadership Team  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Diane Randall  
Executive Secretary  
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Bonny Rodden  
President  
Maine Council of Churches

Rev. Peter S. Sawtell  
Executive Director  
Eco-Justice Ministries

Pastor Reggie Smith  
Executive Director  
Office of Social Justice  
Christian Reformed Church of North America

Rev. Sandy Sorensen  
Director, Washington Office  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Rabbi Daniel Swartz  
Executive Director  
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life