

September 27, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460
June 28, 2016

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

As religious leaders in Ohio, we are concerned with climate change and its impact on the human community. Our faith traditions teach us that we are stewards, not owners, of God's creation for current and future generations. We write to thank you for your commitment to addressing methane pollution, and to urge you to issue national standards that cut emissions of this harmful pollutant from existing oil and gas operations.

Under the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency is granted clear authority to develop methane standards for the oil and gas industry. We believe that the implementation of precise standards helps to protect human and nonhuman communities by controlling natural gas and methane emissions.

Methane is a highly potent heat-trapping pollutant. According to the IPCC, one ton of atmospheric methane contributes to planetary warming more than 86 times as much as a ton of CO₂ during the twenty years after release. The Environmental Protection Agency must address methane pollution immediately and thoroughly in order to prevent the most devastating impacts of climate change.

Oil and gas sources also emit other dangerous pollutants that harm Americans' health, such as smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and cancer-causing toxics like benzene. To protect public health, stronger methane pollution standards must include regulations on VOCs.

Climate change is one of the great moral issues of our time. Methane, a dominant contributor to climate disruption, must be subject to stricter government concern and action. Today, we witness the heavy burden placed on those who are least responsible for climate change. As people of faith, we are called to care for children, the elderly, and the poor. We believe that issuing national standards on existing methane sources in the oil and gas industry will help care for these vulnerable communities.

We applaud your leadership and urge you to continue to protect human health and God's creation by issuing a strong national existing source methane standard. As faith leaders we urge the EPA to use the strongest regulatory tools and provisions of law available to protect the public and move quickly to create safeguards for existing oil and gas facilities.

Sincerely,

Rev. Frank Edmands, Episcopal Ecological Network
Rev. David Hill Oberlin, The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ

Rev. Dean Van Farowe, Calvary Reformed Church
Rev. Dr. J. Roger Skelley-Watts, United Methodist
Rev. Lynn Bozich Shetzer, Presbyterian Church USA
Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt, United Church of Christ
Deacon Nick Bates, Lutheran Advocacy in Ohio
Pastor Grant Eckhart, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Dr. Jim Wilson, Lord of Life Lutheran Church
Rev. Damien Lake, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Rita M. Root, Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations
Rev. Gary Halstead, Christ United Church
Elder Carl Whittaker, Bibleway Church of God in Christ Cincinnati
Rev. Calvin J. Hicks Bethel AME, Cincinnati
Rev. John Ivey, Beulah Baptist, Cincinnati
Bishop Michael Dantley Christ Emmanuel Christian Fellowship, Cincinnati
Rev. James Harris Brown Chapel AME, Cincinnati
Rev. George Parks, Sr. Sacrificial Baptist, Cleveland
Rev. Walter Houston Temple of Praise Baptist, Cleveland
Rev. Wesley Reid Lee Memorial AMEZ, Cleveland
Rev. Stephen D. Sullivan Gethsemane Baptist, Cleveland
Rev. J.R. Chisley, Calvary MBC, Cincinnati
Rev. Henry Wilson Cornerstone MBC, Cincinnati
Rev. Sherman R. Buttram First Baptist of W. College Hill, Cincinnati
Rev. K.Z. Smith, Corinthian Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. E.G. Smith, Jr. First Antioch Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Allen Middleton Galilee Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Jim Vickers, Mountaintop Power Center, Cincinnati
Rev. Walter A. Dobbins, Sr. First Baptist-Mt. Auburn, Cincinnati
Rev. Steve McGhee Greater Faith Baptist, Middletown
Rev. Michael K. Cash, First New Shiloh, Cincinnati
Rev. Paul Bowers, Greater Emmanuel Apostolic Temple, Cincinnati
Rev. Oliver Williams, Friendship Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Iva J. Durand, Jr., Jerriel Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Donald Newberry, Sr., Lee Chapel AME, Cincinnati
Rev. Donald E. Jones, Greater New Hope MBC, Cincinnati
Rev. Harry White, Mount Moriah Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. R.N. Mitchell Mount Sinai Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Gregory Chandler, Sr. Peace Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Eugene Sebastain, Mount Zion Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Cecil Ferrell, St. Mark MBC, Cincinnati
Rev. Russo O'Neal Rockdale Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Damon Lynch, Jr., New Jerusalem Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Jerry Culbreath Tried Stone New Beginning Church, Cincinnati
Rev. Robert E. Baines, Jr. Southern Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Calvin Harper Morningstar Baptist, Cincinnati

Rev. Floyd Brown St Stephens Community Church, Cincinnati
Rev. Timothy Swan Mount Zion Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Orlando Yates Union Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Donald Harvey Mount Zion Baptist, Cincinnati
Bishop Bobby Hilton, Word of Deliverance Ministries, Cincinnati
Rev. Damon Lynch III, New Prospect Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Clayton Walker Tabernacle Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Bennie Fluellen, Overflow Ministries Covenant, Cincinnati
Rev. James H. Cantrell, Zion Baptist, Cincinnati
Rev. Taylor Thompson, Quinn Chapel AME, Cincinnati