

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 27, 2018

The Honorable Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

On March 2, 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it was withdrawing Information Collection Request (ICR) 2548.01, which would have required oil and gas companies to provide information on methane emissions from their operations. On March 8, 2017, two of us sent a letter asking that you reinstate the ICR given the urgent need to collect accurate data on methane emissions in order to set and enforce appropriate and cost-effective standards to reduce such emissions. In the extremely short response we received from the Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation on May 23, 2017, we were informed that the rationale for withdrawing the ICR was to, “allow the Administrator time to assess the need for the requested information.”

Since the date of our original letter, a number of events have occurred that highlight the urgent need to reissue the ICR and collect accurate methane emission data. First, the U.S. Senate rejected the Congressional Review Act effort to repeal the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) methane waste rule, the only such effort to fail in a vote, which demonstrated the strong bipartisan support for reducing methane emissions. Second, both BLM and the EPA have moved to undo, weaken, or avoid promulgating methane regulations, policies that should be informed with the best available science, not vague notions of industry “burdens” and incomplete knowledge of the public benefit of cutting emissions. Third, the most recent release of EPA’s *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks* showed that methane emissions from oil and gas production operations increased 34 percent from 1990 to 2016, and the growth of methane emissions from natural gas production operations outpaced the growth of natural gas production, 58 percent to 52 percent.

Even more concerning, a new report in the journal *Science* from 24 authors representing 12 universities, two government labs, and more, reported that methane emissions from the U.S. oil and gas supply chain were roughly 60 percent higher than EPA inventory estimates, and that emissions from production operations were more than double the EPA estimates.<sup>1</sup> According to a story in *The New York Times* about the study, the 13 million metric tons of methane lost by the oil

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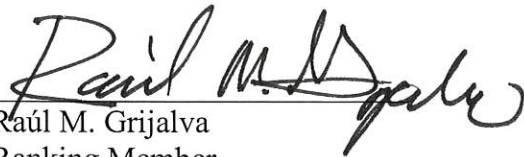
<sup>1</sup> R.A. Alvarez, et al., *Assessment of methane emissions from the U.S. oil and gas supply chain*, *Science* 10.1126/science.aar7204 (2018).

and gas industry each year is worth approximately \$2 billion and would be enough to fuel roughly 10 million homes.<sup>2</sup>

Methane emissions exacerbate the worst impacts of climate change, result in significant air pollution through the concurrent release of ozone-forming volatile organic compounds, waste a valuable resource, and, when occurring on public lands, deprive American taxpayers and states of a valuable source of royalty payments. With new science showing that emissions are likely considerably higher than previously thought, there is no excuse for delaying or rescinding methane emission controls, or for failing to collect data from methane emitters. We believe that EPA needs to reissue the ICR as soon as possible, or provide a comprehensive explanation why it will not. Therefore, we ask that by July 31, 2018, you provide us with the results of your assessment of the need to require methane emission data, as mentioned in the May 23, 2017, response, including a full explanation of how those results were arrived at. If that assessment is not done, please inform us of when you expect to complete it.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this letter.

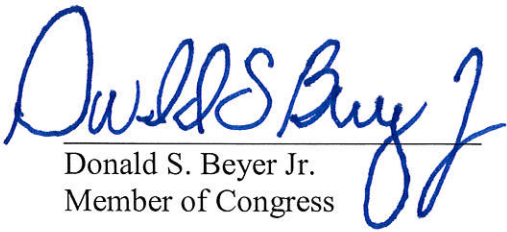
Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources




Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Jared Polis  
Member of Congress

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<sup>2</sup> J. Schwartz and B. Plumer, *The Natural Gas Industry Has a Leak Problem*, The New York Times, June 21, 2018.