

**U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources
Democratic Forum: The Health, Environmental and
Economic Risks of the Republican Campaign to Repeal
the Bureau of Land Management's Methane Waste
Rule**

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The Capitol HVC-201 AB

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South Carolina and Board Member of the South Carolina Christian Action Council*



Thank you, Chairman Grijalva, for the invitation to address this forum today. I am here representing the South Carolina Christian Action Council and the Baptist Educational and Missionary Conference of South Carolina. I pastor a church in the sixth congressional district, home to your Assistant Democratic Leader, Rep. James Clyburn. I have been advocating on Capitol Hill today with Creation Justice Ministries, meeting with the offices of Senator Graham and Senator Scott.

We live in a country with a diversity of religions religious traditions. In my Christian tradition, we believe that "The Earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it" (Psalms 24:1). If all of earth belongs to God, it is not ours to exploit. All of creation is a gift from God, including the methane that gives us natural gas. Until we can find another energy source, we need natural gas to heat our homes.

The Book of Genesis gives us our first job as humanity: till and keep the Earth (Genesis 2:15). We are called to justly share the gifts of God's creation for ALL – today and for future generations. We are called to protect the most vulnerable among us (Matthew 25). When a limited natural resource like methane is wasted until it becomes scarce, it is the poorest among us who will suffer the most, and be forced to go without. When those living closest to the sources of methane pollution get hit first and worst, it is religious communities that respond: with pastoral care, with faith-based sources of health care, and, unfortunately, with the needless funerals we conduct because of preventable asthma and cancer.

As you know, the climate is changing. No one can change that reality with alternative facts. It is being felt first and worst by the most vulnerable among us. We in the great state of South Carolina have already suffered extreme flooding because of rising sea levels and more extreme storms. In other countries like the Philippines, or Madagascar, it is even worse. We have a moral responsibility to cut greenhouse gasses like the methane in natural gas.

Using the Congressional Review Act on this common-sense Rule will force the Bureau of Land Management to withhold its stewardship responsibilities. They will never again be allowed to properly enforce methane stewardship without explicit and intentional Congressional approval, and we all know how often Congress finds space in its busy schedule to organize and grant that: almost never.

Nationwide, state school budgets, road budgets, library budgets, and the federal treasury will lose income if Congressional Review Act is the chosen tool to gut the Bureau of Land Management Natural Gas Waste Reduction Rule. The Bible has something to say about unjust laws:

Woe to those who enact evil statutes
And to those who constantly record unjust decisions,
So as to deprive the needy of justice
And rob the poor of My people of their rights,
So that widows may be their spoil
And that they may plunder the orphans. (Isaiah 10:1-2)

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you today about the moral case to preserve the BLM
Natural Gas Waste Rule.