

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Western faith groups and investment firms call on oil and gas lobby groups to drop opposition to BLM natural gas waste rule**

Today, 25 socially responsible investment firms and Western faith leaders joined together in a [letter](#) calling on oil and gas lobby groups to drop their opposition and support the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's natural gas waste rule, which was proposed earlier this year.

The letter addressed seven trade associations including Western Energy Alliance, Consumer Energy Alliance, Colorado Oil & Gas Association (COGA), New Mexico Oil & Gas Association, New Mexico Association of Commerce and Industry, Colorado Petroleum Council, and La Plata Energy Council. The coalition's call to action comes as COGA members and western energy producers gather for the Rocky Mountain Energy Summit which kicked off this past Monday in Denver.

The group highlighted the more than [\\$330 million](#) worth of natural gas oil and gas companies waste annually through venting, flaring, or leaks from equipment and infrastructure on federal and tribal lands, located primarily in the Intermountain West.

"We have a moral responsibility to cut methane emissions and reduce natural gas waste from oil and gas operations on public lands," said Shantha Alonso, Executive Director of Creation Justice Ministries. Alonso expounded further, "When natural gas is wasted, it means lost revenues that could go to our schools and communities, and lost energy that could be heating homes for low-income families."

The group's letter also pointed to the employment opportunities available in the methane mitigation sector, along with the economic incentive for oil and gas companies to capture and sell natural gas that would otherwise be wasted, referring to research finding oil and gas companies can use already-available solutions to cut methane emissions "by 40 percent for pennies on the dollar."

"Our letter comes on the heels of a ground-breaking report this month by NASA which found that oil and gas operations were a significant contributor behind emissions that have created a methane cloud the size of Delaware hovering over the Four Corners region," says Sister Joan Brown, Director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light. Brown also points out that New Mexico loses \$50 million in royalty revenue annually from methane waste.

Chesie Lee, Director of Wyoming Association of Churches refers to the budget crisis Wyoming is currently facing because of the downturn in energy prices and points out the BLM natural gas waste rule, "translates into millions of dollars in lost royalty revenue that would go toward our public schools and university."

The letter is the second such action targeting trade groups. Last week, Creation Justice Ministries held a virtual "[pray-in](#)" for Western Energy Alliance when the trade group held its annual meeting in Vail, Colorado.

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