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### **50 New Mexicans to Testifying in EPA Methane Listening Session**

*“EPA must act now to ensure the strongest possible safeguards against oil and gas pollution from new and existing equipment alike”*

Washington, DC -- Today, the Environmental Protection Agency will host the first of three listening sessions to engage the public as they begin to craft new rules to tackle methane and associated pollution from new and existing oil and gas operations.

Under the Trump administration, EPA rolled back Obama-era limits on methane pollution from the oil and gas industry. In April, the Senate passed a resolution that would reinstate those 2016 safeguards, and the House is expected to vote on a similar resolution this week. Now, the Biden administration has an opportunity to expand on those protections.

#### **To view testimony:**

- Tuesday, June 15, 2021 session: <https://youtu.be/T8XwDbf-B8g>
- Wednesday, June 16, 2021 session: <https://youtu.be/n7bMTVBg4Zc>
- Thursday, June 17, 2021 session: <https://youtu.be/WNZxenMyuSw>

Here are quotes from some of [50 New Mexicans registered](#) to speak:

"With 122 gas wells on our ranch, we have always looked to the EPA to protect our family from the harmful, toxic and even deadly pollution that every gas well emits. We celebrated in 2012 when EPA put its OOOO Regulations in place and really saw how that immediately improved our lives and those of our neighbors. When those protections were taken away from us in 2017, we suffered not only the physical harms, but also a loss of hope, a lack of faith in our government. Now, as EPA considers restoring those vital protections for our family, we have a chance to hope again. A chance for our faith to be restored." **Don Schreiber, Four Corners Area Rancher**

"Citizens Caring for the Future members, like me, live in the Permian basin and we support strong methane rules that protect our planet from global warming, and also protect frontline communities from the health impacts that these emissions bring to our doorstep. We hope the EPA will take bold action to undo the damage of the previous administration." **Kayley Shoup, Citizens Caring for the Future, Carlsbad, NM**

"My family holds allotments in Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation near Nageezi, New Mexico where extraction has spread rapidly. We always knew about the impacts of oil and gas in our community that we could see with our own eyes all around the Navajo

Nation. After learning more about the methane hotspot that hovers over the Four Corners, I know we need strong action on methane and other pollutants that are invisible and odorless that continue to impact our climate and our communities' health. We are calling on President Biden to enact the strongest methane rules possible to help protect us from further harm." **Joseph Hernandez, NAVA Education Project, Diné Energy Organizer**

"When we were young growing up in Shiprock, there were flowers and grasses carpeting the semi-desert open range areas. Rains and snows came when they were supposed to, now we are in a prolonged drought. We are in a national sacrifice zone with the nation's largest methane hotspot hovering overhead, and we have had to live with the pollution from the power plants, the mining, and the oil and gas development for many decades. The carbon and the gases including methane spewing from these developments is killing the flowers, the rains and the snows, and possibly our future. I respectfully request that the EPA make the strongest rules possible to reduce the methane pollution and stop the release of methane. " **Daryl Junes Joe, Dine elder and United Methodist Women, Shiprock, NM**

"People of faith see climate change as the greatest ethical and moral concern of our time. Not only do frontline communities, the young and old suffer the most from climate change, they are affected most from methane pollution. We have waited too long for strong methane rules. We must act now for life." **Sister Joan Brown, osf, Executive Director, New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light.**

"In the span of my son's short 5 year life we've seen Obama methane rules developed as our Paris Climate Commitments and we've seen the cynical gutting of those rules by the Trump Administration. His future and that of all our kids is at risk. Here in New Mexico industry extracts natural resources off of our public lands and has the audacity to spew methane and other pollutants into the air, harming our climate, our health and our future. Without clear rules and directives industry will continue to do harm. That's why we're all counting on the Biden Administration to take transformative action on climate that will reduce methane emissions 65% by 2025." **Camilla Feibelman, Sierra Club - Rio Grande Chapter, Director**

"Strong rules to reduce methane emissions 65% by 2025 are crucial for EPA to implement, to reduce waste and safeguard public health, our climate and ecosystems, and the unique and fragile landscapes in and connected to our national parks. Our national parks are becoming even more important sanctuaries for plants and animals, as well as fostering wildlife corridors, healthy watersheds, and community-scale protections due to climate change. A 2018 study showed that park visitation drops 8% or more when pollution is high. Without strong federal safeguards, there will be a gut punch to local economies that depend on those visitors." **Emily Wolf, New Mexico Program Coordinator, National Parks Conservation Association**

"EPA has a profound opportunity to chart a course to reduce methane emissions 65% by 2025. In achieving that objective, we urge EPA to act with vision and ambition and

with a laser focus achieving equity, inclusion, and justice. The stakes are simply too high to act differently.” **Erik Schlenker-Goodrich, Western Environmental Law Center, Executive Director**

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