

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Frank Pallone
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chair Rodgers, Ranking Member Pallone, and Honorable Members of the Energy & Commerce Committee,

Reducing oil and gas methane emissions is one of the most efficient and effective ways to address climate change, reduce needless waste, and protect the health of the millions of Americans living in or around active oil and gas sites. Congress made clear that addressing methane was a priority when they passed the Methane Emissions Reduction Program (MERP) in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) last year.

The groups listed below **strongly oppose efforts to repeal the MERP by passing the Natural Gas Tax Repeal Act (H.R. 1141) or through any other means. Doing so would harm the climate, impair public health, increase waste, and cost our economy valuable jobs.**

The MERP includes several important provisions that will help put the U.S. on a path to quickly cut methane emissions, which have already warmed the planet 0.5°C (total warming to date is about 1°C).¹ These provisions include a waste emissions charge (WEC), which only applies to operators with large facilities that release over 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions each year. These large oil and gas operators are only responsible for paying the charge for the portion of emissions exceeding industry-developed, performance-based targets, and many large operators will not be required to pay any fees because they have already made investments to reduce their emissions. Similarly, an independent operator with hundreds of low-producing wells within a particular basin would likely be exempt from the charge.² And of course, operators will be able to avoid assessed fees by making modest investments to reduce emissions and decrease waste.

MERP also includes \$1.55 billion in funding that state agencies, communities, and oil and gas operators can use to reduce methane emissions by advancing and promoting controls to reduce emissions. These efforts and investments would further stimulate economic growth by creating tens of thousands of high-paying, good-quality American jobs in the ever-growing methane mitigation industry,³ all the while reducing needless waste by incentivizing operators to capture methane that would otherwise have been emitted into the atmosphere.

MERP is a forward-looking program, set to put the U.S. on a path of successfully and efficiently reducing oil and gas methane emissions and spurring economic innovation in methane

¹ IPCC, WGI, Summary for Policymakers 7 (2021), https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf

² See for example: <https://www.ogci.com/action-and-engagement/reducing-methane-emissions/#methane-target> and <https://onefuture.us/2022-methane-emissions-intensity-report/>

³ CATF. (2022) "Good Rules, Good Jobs: Employment Opportunities From Emissions Standards for Oil and Gas." https://cdn.catf.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/04105136/CATF_OilGasJobsReport-1.pdf

mitigation. The standards and limits set in MERP are in line with the industry-set goals, and many operators understand the need to lower their emissions and have already started doing so. With this in mind, **we strongly oppose H.R. 1141 and the threat it poses to the environment, the economy, and individuals throughout the country.**

We thank you for your consideration and stand ready to support your efforts to continue implementing MERP and reducing methane emissions in all sectors.

Sincerely,

Breathe Utah
Change the Chamber
Clean Air Council
Clean Air Task Force
Conservation Voters New Mexico
Defend Our Future
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Environmental Defense Fund
Keep It Wild
League of Conservation Voters
Liveable Arlington
Moms Clean Air Force
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Mexico & El Paso Interfaith Power and Light
Northern Plains Resource Council
Ohio Environmental Council
PA-Jewish Earth Alliance
Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Responsible Decarbonization Alliance
Sierra Club
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Colorado Alliance
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Leaders Network