



**RIO BLANCO COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY ADMIN BUILDING, 200 MAIN
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February 14, 2017

The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gardner and Bennet,

This letter is to request your support in repealing the BLM's current venting and flaring rules. Rio Blanco County was present when the BLM drafted and implemented these rules. There was no consideration for the impact these regulations would have on small communities. By their own admission during testimony in April 2016, these rules would only accomplish the following two things: capture minimal payer revenue while operator costs magnify; and offer minimal impact on the reduction of greenhouse gases.

First, the BLM stated that the capture of lost payer revenue would amount to approximately \$3 million. However, the cost to oil and gas operators would be between \$300 million and \$900 million. Using the average of \$600 million in cost, it would take 200 years to pay for the new regulations.

Secondly, the BLM stated environmental benefits from the enforcement of these new rules. The BLM claims that there will be a reduction of approximately 0.0019 of greenhouse gases. This impact seems extremely low when comparing cost versus benefit. It should also be noted that the BLM has no jurisdiction over air quality; those regulations are state regulated. In Rio Blanco County, there are a few days every winter where we are in non-attainment. This is not caused by the oil and gas industry, but due to naturally-occurring conditions. It is clear that the BLM has not considered what these rules will do to small oil and gas operators, especially in rural areas like the west part of our county near Rangely. Many of our small operators' wells only produce around 50 mcf per day or less. The production from these wells does not justify the expensive costs to retrofit them. That means that many wells will be plugged and abandoned.

The three million dollars of lost revenue issued back to the federal government is not worth the cost to small communities and rural counties like our own. The BLM failed to consider the companies they would put out-of-business which will far outweigh the lost resource. Rio Blanco County will lose quality jobs, families will move, and school numbers will decline. Approximately 85 percent of our county's tax revenue is derived from the oil and gas industry. With the negative impacts of the BLM venting and flaring rules, our county and towns will struggle to provide basic services that the government is responsible for providing to their constituents.

For these reasons, we ask you to support repealing the BLM venting and flaring rules. Simply put, the expense to Colorado communities far outweighs any potential benefit the regulations might provide. Western Colorado cannot afford these regulations, and this needs to be taken into account.

Sincerely,

The Board of County Commissioners of
Rio Blanco County, Colorado



Shawn J. Bolton, Chairman



Jeff Rector, Commissioner



Si Woodruff, Commissioner

The Town of Rangely Board of Trustees



Andrew Shaffer, Mayor ProTem