AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Correspondence; US Department of Interior Secretar

Action Requested: Board of County Commissioners' Signature

Parties to the Agreement: BOCC

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

A memorandum to Sally Jewell on Methane gas restrictions

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Joseph Otsuka **Submitter's Email Address:** jotsuka@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ◉ Required ○ Not Required

Comments:
ok db 9/1/16

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\dBaumgarten Discharge Date: 9/1/2016 Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ◉

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 9/1/2016

◉ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ○ Worksession Time Allotted: 0

Agenda Date: 9/6/2016

Revised April 2015

Paula Swenson, Chairperson
Phil Chamberland, Vice Chairperson
Jonathan Houck, Commissioner
Board of County Commissioners for Gunnison County, Colorado
200 E. Virginia Ave Gunnison, CO 81230

September 6th, 2016

Secretary Sally Jewell
United States Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Director Neil Kornze
United State Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Honorable Secretary Jewell and Director Kornze:

On behalf of Gunnison County, Colorado, we are writing in support of the United States ("U.S.") Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") adopting a strong natural gas waste rule that protects Colorado's taxpayers and our air. More than $26 million dollars worth of natural gas in Colorado – and $330 million dollars across the U.S. – are wasted each year from oil and gas operations on federal and tribal lands through venting, flaring, and leaking methane (the primary component of natural gas).

Wasted gas also means lost royalties and tax revenue. Research has estimated that Colorado has lost out on as much as $36 million dollars in royalty revenue since 2009. These dollars would have gone to local governments and help fund infrastructure projects and mitigation efforts addressing the environmental impacts of oil and gas development.

In 2014, Colorado passed the Nation's first-ever rules to cut methane waste and pollution. Two years after the rule was adopted, we saw an increase in natural gas production. We know cutting waste is achievable, and we are well poised to meet and exceed new federal standards. We also rank third in the Nation for businesses in the methane mitigation industry and would see additional job growth once the BLM adopts a natural gas rule.

Unfortunately, Colorado acting alone cannot address this issue. The National Aerospace and Space Administration discovered a methane plume the size of Delaware over the Four Corners region of our State, and the Western Slope of Colorado struggle with ozone pollution due to oil and gas operations occurring across our State lines.

A strong national rule would help address these regional air quality issues and create a level playing field for the industry. It would also ensure that natural resources across the West are developed more responsibly and that the American taxpayers get their fair return.
Given these facts it's of no surprise that bipartisan polls show eighty-one percent (81%) of Coloradans support federal action to limit natural gas waste on public lands.

We look to the BLM, who has a duty to act and address natural gas waste from oil and gas operations on public lands, for leadership on this issue. As Coloradans, we respect and understand the role of oil and gas development in our lives and economy. We believe development must be done responsibly, guaranteeing Colorado taxpayers are receiving a fair return when publicly-owned minerals are developed.

We urge the BLM to enact a strong final natural gas waste rule and to protect the people's resources you are legislatively charged to safeguard. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

The Board of County Commissioners for Gunnison County, Colorado

Paula Swenson	Phil Chamberland	Jonathan Houck
Chairperson	Vice-Chairperson	Commissioner