



COLORADO

Oil, Gas, & Coal - The Methane Rule

The Trump administration has been working hard to reverse the 2016 Methane and Waste Prevention Rule—a rule largely modeled after Colorado’s own successful [Methane Rule](#)³². Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that is leaked, vented, and flared during oil and gas drilling operations. Not only does the gas contribute to poor air quality and adverse public health impacts, it also costs taxpayers as it should be captured and sold. The Trump administration announced their plans to roll back methane regulations on August 29th, 2019, ensuring a future of dirtier air for all Americans.

Colorado communities, particularly those in the Four Corners region, are [still vulnerable](#)³³ to

impacts from methane due to the revised federal standards.

The Four Corners is a methane hotspot due to extensive nearby oil and gas drilling that doesn’t need to adhere to safe methane capture protocols and geographical features that funnel and keep the emissions in the region. This means that polluted air coming from other states impacts southwest Colorado communities such as Telluride, Ridgway, Ophir, Durango, and Ouray despite the 75 percent reduction in methane emissions in the state. All Western communities deserve clean air to breathe and [81 percent](#)³⁴ of Westerners support stricter federal methane regulations to achieve that.

Land Management & Extraction - Dust on Snow

The Trump administration’s unilateral focus on expanding oil and gas leasing on public lands across the West has caused an uptick in oil and gas drilling which results in an increase in dust. This unique combination of factors has caused a dangerous springtime phenomenon of [dust on snow events](#)³⁵ in the mountains of Colorado. Dust blows in during springtime wind storms, settling on the snow. This causes snow to melt 1-4 weeks earlier which negatively impacts both summer and winter tourism, as well as harming agriculture and increasing the likelihood of wildfires.

All such impacts must be considered by the Department of Interior (DOI) when issuing oil and gas leasing permits, yet with “energy dominance” dictating public lands decisions, Colorado mountain towns suffer the consequences.

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Land Management & Extraction - Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan

A June 2019 release of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan](#)³⁶ (RMP) again highlights the Trump administration's commitment to the energy industry and disregard for conservation.

Although the Resource Management Plan (RMP) identifies 190,000 acres of wilderness-quality land it does not prioritize this land for wilderness management. Further, although there is low to no potential for energy development in many of the protected areas, they are still left open for the possibility of development. This region includes South Park between the Sangre de Cristo and Wet mountains and areas in the Rio Grande watershed. By leaving these areas open for the possibility of development, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is neglecting to provide the protections the areas may need to ensure ecosystem stability.

Land Management & Extraction - Uncompahgre Field Office Resource Management Plan

In a troubling June 28, 2019 decision, BLM announced the new RMP for the Uncompahgre Field Office in Western Colorado. The area includes the North Fork Valley, Colorado's "farm to table capital." North Fork Valley has long been eyed for resource development and this plan would open up this and almost all of³⁷ Colorado's Western Slope from Telluride to Paonia to oil and gas development, uranium mining, and coal mining.

The North Fork Valley is ecologically, economically, and culturally sensitive, but has long been targeted for oil and gas development. However, due to the importance of the region's farming and ecological character, citizens and local politicians have rallied together to limit extraction³⁸ and previous versions of the RMP reflected community input. But now, the Trump administration has cast aside community voices in favor of the oil and gas industry by opening up thousands of acres to development in the final plan. BLM admits the plan was created without considering public input, as was directly stated by³⁹ a BLM official: "Public comments resulted in the addition of clarifying text, but did not significantly change proposed land use plan decisions." This is a blatant disregard for public input as well as all other uses of public lands.

