

MY TURN VON BARGEN

Keeping methane regulations is a win for our health, security



Smart business leaders know that wasting resources is bad for your bottom line and the American economy as a whole.

That is why we were so pleased when in mid-May, the U.S. Senate — including Arizona's Sen. John McCain — stood up for good public policy and new American businesses by voting against a bill that would have rolled back the Bureau of Land Management's Methane Waste Rule.

The measure, which failed 51-49, would have led to the continued waste of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of taxpayer-owned energy resources.

Every year, the oil and gas industry loses over \$330 million worth of natural gas on federal and tribal lands through leaks, venting and flaring into the atmosphere, a huge and avoidable waste. By keeping these strong standards in place, the Senate helped save energy, which in turn helps to increase funds for tribes, states and the U.S. Treasury to build schools, roads, infrastructure and more.

It also strengthened a burgeoning do-

mestic market for American methane-mitigation companies, and with that, the prospect of thousands of new jobs and increased global competitiveness.

The Senate's vote to protect these regulations was not only good for our economy; it was also good for our lungs and national security. The BLM rule helps to reduce smog-forming pollution that is released alongside methane. That's why Sen. McCain, following his important vote, said that "improving the control of methane emissions is an important public health and air quality issue."

Keeping more natural gas in the pipelines, through steps such as leak detection, means more domestic energy is available to meet the needs of Americans. This reduces dependence on foreign resources and boosts the share of American energy in world markets.

The idea of cutting methane emissions and conserving natural gas is not some far-off idea; it's one that is driving a broad and growing industry. There are over 130 methane-mitigation companies, with clients in almost every state. That includes large companies providing the

services and technology needed to reduce methane emissions and keep more natural gas in the pipeline, with customers right here in Arizona.

Some of these companies, like FLIR, manufacture infrared cameras that make this invisible problem visible. Others, like Dexter Field Services, use this equipment to find and fix leaks, saving oil and gas producers from needing to invest in expensive equipment. The methane-mitigation industry, which is comprised of mostly small businesses, also employs a diverse workforce. For instance, Dexter Field Services has employed a majority-Native American crew in the Four Corners region.

By voting down this reckless bill, the Senate sent an important market signal, to this expanding industry and the energy industry as a whole, that endless waste is not acceptable. Where standards are not in place, evidence shows only a handful of leading companies will take the initiative to cut waste. But the BLM rule helps provide incentives for oil and gas companies to invest in efficiency, including mitigating their emis-

sions.

In a survey we conducted last year in Colorado, we found that oil and gas companies in the state say that state-level methane rules are effective in finding leaks, and a majority of operators say the benefits outweigh the costs.

BLM's Methane Waste Rule builds on lessons learned from states, such as Colorado and Wyoming, that have addressed emissions from the oil and gas industry. The Senate was right to protect these rules with its recent vote.

With the cost-effective technology and services available, we can reduce methane waste, but it takes leadership from policy makers to make that a reality. We want to thank Sen. McCain and the other senators who courageously stood up for business innovation, new jobs in the methane-mitigation industry and good public policy by voting against this senseless rollback.

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