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Home > House committee debates BLM natural gas flaring rule

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The House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing this week regarding the proposed rule issued in January 2016 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reduce natural gas, or methane, emissions via venting, flaring, and leaks on federal lands.

The committee's Republican majority see the draft rule as a regulatory overreach. Chairman Doug Lamborn (R-CO) claimed that the "one-size-fits-all" approach would cause increased compliance costs and decrease U.S. production of natural gas, which he believes would lead to increased dependence on foreign sources. However, Democratic Ranking Member Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) defended the proposed regulation, which he believes would result in both environmental and economic benefits.

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at the Department of the Interior, Amanda Leiter, testified in defense of the proposed legislation. County commissioners from Colorado, North Dakota, and Wyoming had varying stances on the proposed regulation: some deemed the rule as a step in the right direction, and others argued that regulation would result in a loss of state revenue.

The proposed rule was also met with opposition in a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing earlier this month. The public comment period for the BLM rule ended on April 22, and submitted comments will be reviewed by the agency before moving forward.

Sources: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Federal Register, House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, E&E News
