

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 28, 2017

### **Trump climate order is a bad deal for Western communities**

Leaders of western family agriculture and conservation groups reacted to today's Executive Order from the White House that seeks to roll back the Clean Power Plan and other policies to address climate change, the pause on federal coal leasing, and standards that prevent oil and gas drillers from wasting methane by venting, flaring and leaks.

In response to the Executive Order and the Administration's plan to ignore the threat that climate change poses to our land, water, health, economy, and national security, Monica Wiitanen of Paonia, Colo., Chair of Western Organization of Resource Councils, commented:

“This Executive Order ignores the economic realities facing coal country, the importance of clean water and clean air to all Americans, and the increasing threat to humanity of global climate change.

“Rewriting the Clean Power Plan will not make coal more competitive with other fuels or address the greenhouse gases cooking our planet. The Administration's denial of the impacts of fossil fuel combustion will not mitigate the damage to Earth's climate.

“The diminishing market for coal is causing economic distress in coal country, something this Executive Order does nothing to address. Instead of ignoring the science of catastrophic global climate change, the Administration should be working to help bring new, diverse economic opportunities to coal country.”

In response to the Administration's decision to lift the pause on federal coal leasing, Bob LeResche of Clearmont, Wyo., Chair of Powder River Basin Resource Council, said:

“Nobody has bid on federal coal in the Powder River Basin in almost five years, so lifting the pause is not going to bring significant new leases or jobs. But the leasing pause was keeping money from walking out the door. Western mines already have nearly 20 years of coal on hand, so any new leases will be highly speculative and result in almost giving away coal owned by American taxpayers.”

In response to the Administration's decision to review two standards that protect oilfield residents from the air pollution and health effects of excessive venting and flaring of methane and decrease the waste of natural gas, Lisa DeVille, Chair of Ft. Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights (POWER), an affiliate of Dakota Resource Council on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, said:

“People like me who live with flares want these standards to be implemented and enforced. Night and day, we see flares wasting natural gas. Every day, we breathe polluted air from flares and leaks. These standards protect taxpayers and the health of people who live with oil and gas drilling.

“People across the country support these protections, which took years of work and public input to write. Without these safeguards, the polluting oil and gas industry will continue to recklessly release toxic chemicals into the air, harming our health, damaging the climate, and wasting a taxpayer-owned resource.

“Wasting natural gas is not good for America. We will continue to oppose efforts by the greedy oil and gas lobbyists and their allies in Congress to roll back protections for taxpayers and public health.”

Steve Charter, a past chair of Northern Plains Resource Council who ranches above an underground coal mine near Shepherd, Mont., said:

“Today, President Trump picked corporate profits over Western families. Low natural gas prices and consumer choice have been driving low coal prices. The president’s efforts to repeal protections for our air, water, health, and climate won’t change that. Instead of offering false solutions, the president should get real about helping coal communities diversify their economies and prepare for a future with less coal mining.”

*The Western Organization of Resource Councils is a seven-state network of grassroots community organizations working to shape energy policy and strengthen communities.*

*Powder River Basin Resource Council is working for the conservation of Wyoming’s land, landscapes, minerals, water and air and the preservation and enrichment of Wyoming’s agricultural heritage and rural lifestyle.*

*Northern Plains Resource Council is a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group. We organize Montana citizens to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and unique quality of life.*

*Dakota Resource Council is a grassroots organization formed in 1978 to protect North Dakota’s land, air, water, rural communities and agricultural economy. DRC works for preservation of family farms, enforcement of corporate farming laws, soil and water conservation, regulation of coal mining and oil and gas development, protection of groundwater and clean air, renewable energy, and sound management of solid and toxic wastes.*