

# THE NAVAJO NATION

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JONATHAN NEZ | PRESIDENT MYRON LIZER | VICE PRESIDENT

April 26, 2021

Senator Martin Heinrich  
303 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Diana DeGette  
2111 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Congressional Review Act Resolutions SJR 14 and HJR 34

Dear Senator Heinrich and Representative DeGette,

The Navajo Nation appreciates your leadership on efforts to restore sensible regulation to limit methane waste and pollution from the oil and gas industry and stands in strong support of your Congressional Review Act Resolutions SJR 14 and HJR 34.

Oil and gas development on the Navajo Nation has provided income for the Navajo Nation government and jobs for the community. Oil and natural gas are extracted from and transported through the Navajo Nation every day. During oil and natural gas extraction, processing, transportation, and storage, significant volumes of methane (and other pollutants) are released into the atmosphere, harming public health and the environment, as well as causing the loss of royalty payments to the Navajo Nation.

Because of the extensive oil and natural gas development and transportation in the area, a large methane hotspot over the Four Corners region can consistently be viewed from space satellite images. The Navajo Nation honors its sacred obligation and duty to respect, preserve, and protect its resources, sacred places, the environment, and human health. The Navajo Nation is therefore keenly interested in federal environmental regulations affecting Navajo lands, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) New Source Performance Standards for the Oil and Natural Gas sector.

SJR 14 and HJR 34 build upon the previous opposition by the Navajo Nation and others to the harmful methane rollbacks enacted by the Trump Administration. In 2019 when the U.S. EPA was considering these rollbacks, the Navajo Nation filed formal comments in opposition to the September 24, 2019 Proposed Rule: Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources Review, urging to uphold the 2016 requirements, and stated that "EPA should maintain the 2016 New Source Performance Standards, including for the transmission and storage segment, and prescribe regulations for the control of methane emissions from existing sources as Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act requires."

The Navajo Nation is concerned about methane, Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted throughout the oil and natural gas development cycle. HAPs such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, and n-hexane are linked to numerous human health hazards, including cancer and reproductive, developmental, and neurological damage. Similarly, VOCs contribute to smog formation, which can lead to childhood asthma attacks and even premature death. Methane and VOCs are precursors to ground-level ozone, which contribute to several harmful health and environmental impacts.

There are thousands of oil and gas wells and miles of pipelines located on and running through the Navajo Nation. And while the Navajo EPA is developing our own regulations to limit harmful pollution from these sources, federal new and existing source standards are also of vital importance since our air knows no boundaries and pollution from neighboring areas can still have a negative impact on tribal communities.

SJR 14 and HJR 34 are important pieces of legislation designed to restore vital safeguards to our air and climate. Thank you for sponsoring this legislation that will positively impact the Navajo Nation and tribal communities.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Nez, *President*  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**

cc: Senator Ben Lujan  
Senator Krysten Sinema  
Senator Mark Kelly  
Senator Mitt Romney  
Senator Mike Lee  
Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez  
Representative Tom O'Halleran  
Representative John Curtis