From:	Dan Salzwedel
To:	NMOAI, NMENV; WasteRule, EMNRD, EMNRD
Subject:	[EXT] comment on methane regulations
Date:	Thursday, September 17, 2020 3:28:05 PM

Dear Secretaries Cottrell Propst and Kenney:

As you consider new methane regulations for the oil and gas industry, please proceed with caution. It's of the utmost importance that New Mexico gets them right – because the stakes could not be higher.

The oil and gas industry provides more than one-third of funding for New Mexico schools. By category, this equated to over $1 billion for public schools and over $300 million for public colleges and universities in fiscal year 2019 alone. Having served as director for the New Mexico Activities Association for 23 years and as a superintendent of a school district in the southern part of the state, I have seen firsthand how important this funding is to our students.

This is why the proposed methane regulations on the oil and gas are concerning to me. It's important to protect our environment with sensible regulations, but if not done right, these regulations could impede our primary source of funding for public schools and higher education institutions.

When money gets tight at schools, unfortunately, athletics and other extracurricular activities – essential for a well-balanced student – are often the first items on the chopping block. Interscholastic activities are the only discipline which directly addresses and formally teaches the qualities necessary to achieve in a competitive society, which was principal to the purpose of public education's origin.

On average, students that participate in high school sports or non-athletic activities have a higher GPA than non-participants; perform better on the ACT; and hold more leadership positions at the local, state, and national levels than students who do not participate.

Activities provide younger students a unique and fun environment to learn perseverance, teamwork, integrity, friendly competition, work ethic, cultural growth, self-worth, goal setting, personal responsibility, and many other healthy character traits. These activities also provide students with positive mentors, social relationships and a healthy competitive environment that fosters leadership skills and positive time management.

Character development, concepts of success in a competitive society, cultural growth and teaching people to have high expectations of themselves are inherent traits of these experiences - uniquely taught in the interscholastic educational laboratory for learning.

Kids cannot afford to lose out on these activities and development opportunities. Even a small hit to state revenue may affect their ability to participate.

For this reason, new methane regulations need to be crafted carefully, backed by both data and science. We need a proper balance: protecting both our environment and the industry that injects critical revenue in our state's education system. Get it wrong – you risk procedurally choking off critical funding for resources we needed to provide our children these unique experiences.

Remember, there are political opportunists who want to "keep it in the ground" – let's not delay New Mexico's progress. I urge you to craft rules that enhance growth and help produce higher expectations for all.

As I have told many of my students over the years, we need to raise our expectations and work not to survive but to achieve. New Mexico has that same opportunity and we can't afford to squander it. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,
Dan Salzwedel
Education consultant and former educator

Sandia Park