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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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February 4, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear President Obama:

I applaud the updated rules set forth by your Administration and the Bureau of Land Management regarding oil and gas fields on public and native owned lands. The reduction of gas flaring and integration of modern leak detection technology is an excellent step in curbing greenhouse gas pollution. However, as you are aware, these regulations do not fully address the hundreds of underground natural gas storage facilities located around the United States.

As seen at the Aliso Canyon Storage Facility near Porter Ranch in my home state of California, the consequences of a natural gas storage facility malfunction can be catastrophic. Since October, the leak at the Aliso Canyon Storage Facility has displaced thousands of families. Although the leak is showing signs of slowing, the storage facility has released millions of pounds of harmful greenhouse gases, specifically methane. This influx of pollution is alarming and detrimental to the health of not just residents of the Porter Ranch area, but all Californians.

My concern rests with the safety of the residents in California, and to avert possible future natural gas leaks. As you are aware, numerous storage facilities are outdated and lack sufficient safety mechanisms to prevent leaks. Basic safety precautions, such as emergency shut off mechanisms and updated leak detection technology, should be initiated as soon as possible.

Strong federal oversight is needed to ensure the safe and continued operation of these wells. I strongly encourage your Administration to work with the proper federal agencies to create an effective rule to prevent future leaks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Loretta Sanchez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress