Secretary Jewell Statement on President Obama’s Strategy to Cut Methane Emissions

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today issued the following statement on the Obama Administration’s goal to cut methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40 – 45 percent from 2012 levels by 2025, a key effort in the President’s Climate Action Plan:

"Reducing methane emissions is an important part of the picture as we work collaboratively with federal, state, local and industry partners to harness America's domestic energy potential while also tackling climate change. This strategy will help improve public health and safety, and ensure a fair return to taxpayers for developing federal oil and gas resources. The President’s strategy will put captured methane to productive use as a source of cleaner energy for power generation, heating and manufacturing, and will spur investment in local economies through modernized natural gas pipeline gathering and processing projects, generating new revenue and creating American jobs."

Under the President’s earlier call for a comprehensive Interagency Strategy to Reduce Methane Emissions, Interior’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will update decades-old standards to reduce wasteful venting, flaring and leaks of natural gas, which is primarily methane, from oil and gas wells. These standards, to be proposed this spring, will address both new and existing oil and gas wells on public lands, in operational aspects not covered by EPA’s proposed rule. The BLM also released an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to gather public comment on the development of a program for the capture and sale, or disposal, of waste mine methane on lands leased by the Federal Government.

Secretary Jewell visited North Dakota’s Bakken Region to inspect new technologies being employed by some companies in the region to capture and reduce natural gas emissions. Jewell also met with Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper and representatives from the oil and gas industry, non-government organizations, and Colorado officials to discuss collaborative efforts to reduce methane emissions in the production, storage and transportation of oil and gas.