

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 27, 2012

The Honorable Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson,

We write as members of the House Energy and Commerce and Natural Resources Committees who represent districts from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region VI. As members of the committees with jurisdiction over EPA and energy production, we are dismayed and concerned with the actions and words of EPA Region VI Administrator Al Armendariz. We are particularly troubled by comments that recently surfaced from a 2010 video of remarks where Mr. Armendariz endorses a "general philosophy" of EPA to "crucify" and "make examples" of oil and gas companies.

To be clear, we believe in reasonable and effective regulation of drilling activity to protect our environment, and we believe that those who purposefully break the law should be punished. But Mr. Armendariz' comments and actions reveal an ingrained prejudice and hostility towards domestic oil and gas production which is responsible for more than 9 million jobs in the United States. We believe that those who regulate an important economic activity should not hold such a hostile bias.

Specifically, Mr. Armendariz said in the video:

*"The Romans used to conquer little villages in the Mediterranean. They'd go into a little Turkish town somewhere, they'd find the first five guys they saw and they would crucify them. And then you know that town was really easy to manage for the next few years."*

It was only when these harsh comments were brought to light, that Mr. Armendariz apologized. The comments may have been meant as an analogy, but in the context of actions taken by EPA Region VI, they reveal a troubling trend of hostility toward oil and gas production. EPA Region VI has taken serious actions to halt energy production through Emergency Orders, intimidation, costly regulations and lawsuits.

Mr. Armendariz' zealous overreach became apparent soon after he assumed his position. In 2010, EPA Region VI usurped state authority by issuing an Emergency Endangerment Order against Range Resources, a natural gas producer operating in Texas, without notice or opportunity for a hearing. The Emergency Endangerment Order alleged cause or contribution to the occurrence of natural gas in two domestic water wells and directed Range Resources to engage in long-term and costly remedial action. As emails and sworn testimony by EPA staff indicate, the decision by Mr. Armendariz to issue the emergency order was unjustified and politically motivated. Before making public the emergency order, he made sure his friends and allies representing active anti-drilling organizations were given a heads up, emailing them, " We are about to make a lot of news. There'll be an official press release in a few minutes...time to Tivo Channel 8."

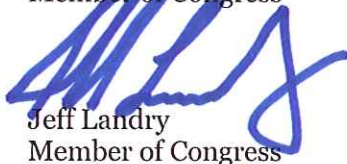
Even though experts from the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) were actively investigating the claim, Mr. Armendariz went forward with the order. The RRC ultimately determined that the wells drilled by Range Resources could not have caused the contamination of water wells as alleged by the EPA. Testimony also revealed that EPA staff had expressed doubts that Range could have actually caused or contributed to the alleged endangerment. Despite this, Mr. Armendariz' filed suit in U.S. District Court, seeking injunctive relief and monetary damages. However, bolstered by sworn testimony from EPA staff, the District Court issued a stay, pending resolution of a parallel proceeding before the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. As you know, after two years of costly litigation and hostile attacks, this March, the EPA quietly withdrew the Emergency Endangerment Order.

This is a prime example of the approach that Mr. Armendariz has taken in overseeing EPA Region VI. The video tape of his candid admission of his hostile view of domestic oil and gas simply puts into words the policies he has tried to implement. Federal courts have overruled his attempts to halt energy production in Texas and provide ample evidence that he is furthering a political agenda instead of protecting human health and the environment through appropriate monitoring and oversight.

America needs regulators who will provide objective oversight, needed expertise within the industry they are working in and bring a balanced approach to the job they have been tasked with. Put simply, we cannot allow a federal agency to rule through fear and intimidation. Given these egregious examples of abuse, we respectfully ask for Mr. Armendariz's dismissal. Allowing him to remain in his position sends a message to the states in Region VI that this type of behavior is condoned by EPA.

Very respectfully,

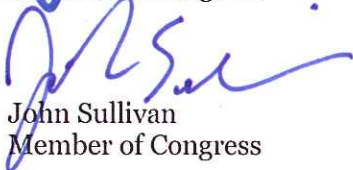
Pete Olson  
Member of Congress



Jeff Landry  
Member of Congress



John Fleming  
Member of Congress



John Sullivan  
Member of Congress



Bill Flores  
Member of Congress



Joe Barton  
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress