

Montanans should support EPA efforts to make oil well emissions rules

Our family cattle ranch is located east of Bainville, placing it in the Montana portion of the Bakken oil field. As the days grow colder and darker, I am appalled when I drive by countless oil well flares spouting huge flames into thin air. What a waste! What poor stewardship of a natural resource! Moreover, it is a demonstrated fact that the volatile organic compounds associated with flaring are a health hazard, especially to children.

Most states have at least some rules in place limiting the time a well can be flared, or otherwise trying to control and capture emissions. Not so Montana; to my knowledge, we have little or no regulation of these emissions.

Recently, the EPA has proposed a few common sense rules regarding oil well emissions and is currently soliciting comment upon them. They appear to be simple, common sense directives: find and fix leaks, complete fracked wells utilizing a proven method sometimes called "green completion," and in the case of new production, utilize best practices throughout the process of producing and transporting these gases. Inasmuch as Montana neglects to provide any regulation regarding the capture and control of harmful emissions, I urge Montanans to support the EPAs efforts — or at least comment upon them. The comment period closes Dec. 4, and I believe the epa.gov website will provide you access.

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