



FAQ: Draft rules from the Bureau of Land Management to Curb Methane Waste and Pollution from Federal and Tribal Lands

On January 22nd the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced a draft rule aimed at curbing natural gas waste and pollution on America's federal and tribal lands. Specifically this rule aims to reduce venting (intentional releases of gas into the atmosphere), flaring (burning off gas), and leaks from the oil and natural gas industry on these lands. This rule applies to equipment in use today, as well as those that will be built or updated in the future.

What are the benefits of this rule?

- **Save American Energy** – In 2013, it is estimated that oil and gas companies operating on federal and tribal lands wasted more than [\\$330 million](#) worth of natural gas through leaks and the wasteful practice of venting and flaring, that's enough natural gas to supply a city the size of Chicago for a year.
- **Save taxpayer revenue and benefit local governments** - According to a recent [report](#), U.S. taxpayers could lose out on \$800 million over the next decade as a result of wasteful venting and flaring natural gas.
- **Benefit Public Health** – Venting, flaring, and leaking natural gas spews millions of tons of toxic pollution into the air every year—damaging the air our children breathe and increasing risks of developing asthma and other respiratory diseases.
- **Create Jobs**- Efforts to reduce methane waste from federal and tribal lands help foster a new and [growing economic sector](#) -- the businesses that develop, manufacture, and implement the technologies that increase efficiency in the oil and gas industry.

Why do we need national standards to address this waste?

BLM is responsible for ensuring that natural resources developed on public and tribal lands are managed responsibly. Sensible federal waste reduction rules **level the playing field** for the operators, **protect regional air quality**, and better **manage taxpayer resources**.

Additionally, [other national efforts](#) to reduce oil and gas air pollution do not tackle flaring and apply only to new and modified facilities---**leaving a massive amount of emissions on the table**.

Without requiring oil and gas developers to put forward cost-effective measures that increase efficiency, minimize emissions, and reduce waste, **BLM cannot ensure that it is performing its duty of wisely managing our nation's mineral estate**.

Will this rule make energy development on public lands difficult?

These same concerns were raised by some in Colorado when it looked to adopt new air rules in 2014, and they have proved to be **unfounded**. Since Colorado put their methane rules in place, their [natural gas production](#) and [number of active wells](#) have increased, and the state's economy as a whole has outpaced national economic indicators. This is because efforts to reduce methane waste are extremely [cost-effective](#); cutting methane emissions are among the best deals in the energy industry.