



Methane pollution threatens Ohio's health-*Cleveland.com*

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The U.S. recently participated in the Paris Climate Conference where there was a big conversation about this country's greenhouse gas emissions. From here in the Buckeye State it might feel hard to understand the impact these talks have back at home, but the truth is they do.

For example, consider that the Obama Administration has set a goal of reducing industrial methane pollution by 40-45 percent by 2025. In order for us to meet that target, which is part of our larger effort to cut emissions by 26 to 28 percent by 2030, we'll have to (among other things) reign in methane pollution from the oil and gas industry in states across the country, including Ohio.

Fortunately, just a few months ago the Obama Administration proposed the nation's first-ever methane pollution standards, designed to do just that. These new standards – which have yet to be finalized – are an important first step in cutting industrial methane pollution that's not in some far off place, like Paris, but in our own backyards.

In 2013 alone, oil and gas producers in Ohio leaked more than 13,000 metric tons of methane pollution. What makes this so alarming is that methane is a particularly potent greenhouse gas that traps 80 times more heat in the short term than carbon dioxide.

What's worse though is that this pollution also has a negative impact on our health: The methane pollution and toxic chemicals that the oil and gas industry carelessly leak into the air throughout the drilling and delivery process create smog, which triggers asthma attacks (especially in children and seniors) and can cause cancer.

Unless the newly proposed standards are put into effect, the Environmental Protection Agency predicts that industrial methane pollution from the oil and gas industry will increase by 25 percent by 2025. That alone should be enough reason to act, but taking steps to address methane pollution also makes economic sense.

For example, last year, the oil and gas industry nationwide leaked at least \$1 billion worth of methane, which is actually natural gas. To put that in perspective, enough gas was leaked across the country to heat all 5 million homes in Ohio. But the standards would not just benefit industry, it would also create an economic boon for 16 gas leak safety companies operating in Ohio that employ

hardworking Ohioans who go to work every day and provide the services and technology needed to plug these leaks.

As a conservative Republican, a person of faith and a parent, it's my belief that we have a moral imperative to stop this pollution in order to protect the one planet that was given to us and safeguard the air that all of us – no matter what our party or faith – breathe.

