

# The Times-Tribune

**Sound action on methane  
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Gov. Tom Wolf's call to reduce the natural gas industry's methane leakage is sound on its own merits. But the measures he endorsed have the added virtue of being well within the industry's grasp.

The governor made his proposal Tuesday, a day before NASA and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration announced that 2015, globally, was the hottest year ever recorded.

Methane, a "greenhouse gas," is a key factor in warming. Although far less abundant than carbon dioxide, methane is exponentially more efficient at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Pennsylvania is the nation's second-largest natural gas producer, so reducing methane emissions across the state would be a substantial contribution to the global effort to control climate change. Mr. Wolf's goal is to reduce emissions by 40 percent within five years.

Natural gas itself is an important tool to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Its abundance has resulted in its growing use as a replacement for coal-fired power generation. Gas produces less than half of the pollution of coal-fired generation.

But those improvements could be erased by methane leaks from drilling sites, compressor stations and other gas-related infrastructure.

The American Petroleum Institute noted that the industry itself has reduced its methane gas emissions by 11 percent since 2005, which is impressive.

But the reductions are not uniform across the industry. Mr. Wolf would establish, as regulations, the "best practices" used by some elements of the industry to reduce emissions, making them universal. Capturing more methane also would be to the industry's benefit, in that it is, basically, what it sells as fuel.

The governor's proposal is a sound, achievable step toward diminishing the amount of methane entering the atmosphere.