

New Mexico's Methane Problem

Reducing oil and gas methane emissions will benefit New Mexico Communities

Natural gas is primarily methane, a colorless odorless greenhouse gas that can escape undetected from hundreds of thousands of different sources across the natural gas supply chain---from the well pad to processing facilities, to pipelines and everywhere in between.

Every year the industry leaks millions of tons of methane and other dangerous pollutants into the air. These emissions could be cut in half by implementing cost-effective tools and technologies.

But uncontrolled, these emissions represent the waste of an important energy resource, deteriorate air quality and increase our rate of global warming. National efforts to reduce emissions are critically important.

A wasted New Mexico resource

- In 2014 New Mexico's oil and gas producers reported wasting more than **180,000 metric tons of methane**ⁱⁱ -- enough to heat more than **168,000 homes** each year.
- This lost methane also represents represents lost royalties to taxpayers. A recent report found that New Mexico taxpayers have lost out on more than **\$50 million in royalty revenue** since 2010.ⁱⁱⁱ

Impacts to health and environment

- Methane is responsible for about **a quarter of the global warming**^{iv} we are already experiencing.
- Over the next two decades, methane will trap **80 times more heat** in the atmosphere than the same amount of carbon dioxide^v.
- Methane escapes with other pollutants^{vi} that can increase **ground level ozone** and impact public health.

Broad agreement for New Mexico to act on methane

In 2014, New Mexico made headlines when NASA discovered giant methane "hotspot" the size of Delaware over New Mexico's San Juan Basin--- **the highest concentration of methane in the nation**^{vi}. Since then, momentum has been building to take action on New Mexico's methane emissions.

- December 2014: The **Western Governors' Association issued a resolution** about the importance of regulating oil and gas methane emissions^{viii}.
- January 2015: New Mexico State Senator Benny Shendo sponsors **Senate Memorial 29**^{ix} to establish a task force to study the economic and environmental impact of venting and flaring gas in New Mexico.



- July 2015: U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich joined U.S. Representative Ben Ray Lujan and Michelle Lujan Grisham in sending **a letter to the White House** urging the EPA and BLM to address the methane emissions^x.
- September 2015: **New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez** included a commitment to methane emission reductions in **New Mexico's Energy Policy and Implementation Plan**.

"[F]ar too much of our natural gas resources are being wasted due to outdated requirements... This methane pollution represents a significant economic loss to the state of New Mexico."

- February 2016 letter from more than 40 local officials to the U.S. BLM Dir. Neil Kornze.

National efforts to reduce methane will benefit New Mexico

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently proposed methane emission limits for new and modified sources in the oil and gas industry, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is expected to issue standards to cut wasteful venting, flaring and leaks on federal and tribal lands in the coming months. These actions will be critical for helping New Mexico maintain its energy economy while reducing harmful air pollution and unnecessary waste.

- The US oil and gas industry is the leading industrial source of methane pollution. If action isn't taken, emissions are projected to **increase 25%** over the next decade^{xi}.
- Emissions from New Mexico's federal and tribal lands remains largely unmanaged--- the gas wasted each year is valued at **more than \$100 million**^{xii}, and could be recaptured and brought to market with strong venting and flaring rules from BLM.
- New Mexico is home to **11 companies**^{xiii} that specialize in methane mitigation; policies that require drillers to use these tools and services could bolster this growing industry and provide **highly skilled, good-paying jobs** to New Mexico.

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- ⁱ Waste Not report, from Clean Air Task Force et al. <http://catf.us/resources/publications/files/WasteNot.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ <http://www2.epa.gov/ghgreporting> Data from Subpart W GHG Reported Data. Emissions allocated to each state based on percentage of production from each basin in the states.
- ⁱⁱⁱ http://westernvaluesproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WVP_NM_Royalties_Report.pdf
- ^{iv} EDF calculation based on [IPCC AR5](#) WGI Chapter 8.
- ^v IPCC AR5 p. 714 https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_Chapter08_FINAL.pdf
- ^{vi} EPA <http://www.epa.gov/groundlevelozone/basic.html>
- ^{vii} http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2014/09oct_methanehotspot/
- ^{viii} http://westgov.org/images/RESO_Methane_15-02.pdf
- ^{ix} <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/15%20Regular/memorials/senate/SM029.HTML>
- ^x http://www.tomudall.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=2046
- ^{xi} White House fact sheet: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/14/fact-sheet-administration-takes-steps-forward-climate-action-plan-anno-1>
- ^{xii} <http://blogs.edf.org/energyexchange/2015/06/23/big-oil-and-gas-emissions-out-west-new-report-sizes-methane-problem-on-federal-and-tribal-lands/>
- ^{xiii} Datu Research report: 'The Emerging U.S. Methane Mitigation Industry'
https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/us_methane_mitigation_industry_report.pdf