

Montana should adopt EPA methane rule

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My friends who live in the Montana portion of the Bakken have definite problems with the flaring, venting, and leaking of natural gas. The practices allowed by the state of Montana for flaring, venting, and leaking of natural gas is a waste of Montana's valuable natural gas resource. Additionally these practices harm the health of hardworking Montana's that live and work near oil and gas development by degrading air quality and exposing people to volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Recently the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed new rules aimed at limiting emissions from oil and gas development like flaring, venting, and leaking of natural gas. Like many Montanans, I am wary of fully supporting the EPA proposal, however, oversight is desperately needed. In Montana we lack basic safeguards for people living and working near oil and gas development. We have no required setbacks for oil and gas wells near homes and businesses, no regulation of flaring, and we need more data related to air emissions from oil and gas. Recently the amount of natural gas being flared has been made publicly available, which is a step in the right direction.

The EPA proposal will ensure that all new wells in Montana will have to limit the amount of natural gas that is wasted by requiring inspections of oil and gas wells, the use of best practices to avoid venting and leaking, and potentially, controls on flaring. Because Montana lacks the basic protections provided by the EPA's proposal, I urge Montanan's to support the EPA's proposal to limit air emissions from oil and gas.

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