

# DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

## EPA Methane rules can advance Colorado's economic success

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As elected officials and as moms, we know firsthand how crucial clean air is to our families and communities in Adams and Arapahoe counties. We also know that steady, good paying jobs are front of mind issues for our constituents as well.

That is why we are proud that the state of Colorado has been a leader on strong rules to limit methane pollution. These rules clean our air and put our businesses in a great position for growth as the federal government follows suit.

In 2014 with Gov. [John Hickenlooper](#)'s leadership, Colorado became the first state in the nation to tackle methane emissions from the oil and gas industry. We are proud of the strength of our rules and the collaborative process that led to their enactment, with industry leaders like Noble, Anadarko, and Encana sitting down with environmental and community leaders to come to agreement on them. These sensible rules are helping eliminate more than 90,000 tons of smog-forming pollution from our air annually (the same amount produced by all the cars and trucks in Colorado) and more than 100,000 tons of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas.

These rules are also fostering a vibrant and growing methane mitigation industry in Colorado. According to a report from Datu Research, Colorado ranks 3rd in the nation for clusters of the companies that make, sell, and support methane control technologies. The majority of these companies are small businesses. This industry also supports four Colorado manufacturing plants providing solid jobs across the state.

In the year after the state of Colorado enacted our rules directly regulating methane, Weld County, the heart of the state's drilling boom, had the country's highest job growth at about 16 percent. And according to the federal Bureau of statistics Adams County businesses are third in the nation for job creation.

Seeing this success story, other states have started to follow Colorado's lead. Wyoming, California, Ohio and Pennsylvania have all adopted or are in the process of adopting rules that will significantly reduce methane and smog forming pollution from the oil and gas sector. And this year the Western Governors Association passed a resolution highlighting the importance of the regulation of methane emissions and the commoditization of natural gas that is currently lost to leaks, venting and flaring throughout the west.

Building on the Colorado model, we are pleased that both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Bureau of Land Management recently announced plans to reduce methane pollution nationwide. These

rules will help create a level playing field for Colorado's oil and gas companies, promote efficiency in the oil and gas industry and better protect the health of families from oil and gas related air pollution. National rules will also help Colorado's methane mitigation industry as other states and regions play catch up.

The oil and gas industry itself has noted that due to Colorado's strongest-in-the-nation methane rules, they will have to do little, if anything, to demonstrate compliance with the new federal regulations.

However, we think EPA should go farther. Unlike what Colorado has in place and what BLM has proposed for federal and tribal lands, the EPA proposal only addresses new wells. It would do nothing to reduce pollution from the hundreds of thousands of oil and gas wells that are already out there. Also, both EPA and BLM should take a closer look at Colorado's strong requirements for companies to regularly check for and fix leaking equipment at drilling and production sites. The proposed federal rules are not addressing far too many tons of pollution that could be sensibly and cost effectively controlled as we have done here in Colorado.

We hope you will join us in letting EPA and BLM know that their methane rule proposals are a good start and that they can and should go even farther to protect our air and foster a vital Colorado economic success story.

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