

# Cutting natural gas waste on public and tribal lands

*Reducing oil and gas methane emissions will benefit the American taxpayer, Western communities*

Natural gas is primarily methane, a colorless odorless gas that can escape undetected from hundreds of thousands of different sources across the oil and gas supply chain---from the well pad to processing facilities, to pipelines and everywhere in between. Industry also deliberately vents and flares natural gas during the production process.

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.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) natural gas waste rule is an important step to cut waste on public and tribal lands. The rule should be strengthened to ensure a fair return to taxpayers, put American energy to good use, clean up our air, and cut global warming pollution.



## A wasted public resource

- **Oil and gas companies are wasting more than \$330 million worth of natural gas** on federal and tribal lands each year. In fact, enough natural gas is being wasted to supply a city the size of Chicago for a year.<sup>ii</sup>
- **Taxpayers could lose out on \$800 million over the next decade** as a result of venting and flaring natural gas alone. Half of those revenues would go to states to help fund education, road, bridges, and more.<sup>iii</sup>

## Cost-effective measures that create jobs

- Companies can reduce waste on public and tribal lands for **less than a penny per Mcf** (thousand cubic feet of gas).<sup>iv</sup>
- Cutting methane spurs innovation and creates jobs. **More than 75 companies are now active in methane mitigation** with over 500 locations across 46 states.<sup>v</sup>
- **Leading states such as Colorado, Wyoming and North Dakota have shown we can effectively cut waste** and pollution through similar measures to those BLM has proposed.

## American families at risk

- When methane is released into the air, so too are **harmful pollutants that have significant public health consequences**. This includes cancer-causing toxics such as benzene and other smog-forming pollutants that trigger asthma.<sup>vi</sup>
- The increased warming caused by methane pollution also sparks a domino effect that **increases ground-level ozone levels** that can also lead to asthma.<sup>vii</sup>
- Over the next two decades, methane will trap **80 times more heat** in the atmosphere than the same amount of carbon dioxide<sup>viii</sup>.

## Broad agreement to act

- A January 2016 bipartisan Colorado College poll found that **80% of westerners support common sense rules that cut natural gas waste** on public lands.<sup>ix</sup>
- **Westerners support a strong BLM rule** including landowners, more than 60 state and local officials, Governors and U.S. Senators, tribal members, public health advocates, Latino groups, and others.

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<sup>i</sup> *Waste Not*, Clean Air Task Force et al. <http://catf.us/resources/publications/files/WasteNot.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> *Onshore Petroleum and Natural Gas Operations on Federal and Tribal Lands in the United States*, ICF International, <https://www.edf.org/energy/substantial-loss-natural-gas-public-lands>

<sup>iii</sup> *Up in Flames*, Western Values Project, <http://westernvaluesproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Up-In-Flames.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> *Onshore Petroleum and Natural Gas Operations on Federal and Tribal Lands in the United States*, ICF International, <https://www.edf.org/energy/substantial-loss-natural-gas-public-lands>

<sup>v</sup> *The Emerging U.S. Methane Mitigation Industry*, Datu Research, [\*The Emerging U.S. Methane Mitigation Industry\*](#)

<sup>vi</sup> *State of the Air*, American Lung Association, <http://www.stateoftheair.org/>

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>viii</sup> IPCC AR5 p. 714 [https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5\\_Chapter08\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_Chapter08_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>ix</sup> *Conservation in the West*, Colorado College, <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/>