

Methane Policy & Issues

Summary of Comments - September 29th, 2023

On September 29th, 2023, OurEnergyPolicy hosted a discussion about methane policy and efforts to reduce methane emissions in the United States. Find the audio recording [here](#).

SPEAKERS



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OurEnergyPolicy is a non-partisan organization. The following represents a summary of comments from the panelists.

Key Takeaways

- Methane emissions are responsible for approximately one third of global warming.
- The Global Methane Pledge aims to reduce global emissions by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.
- The United States (US) is in the process of implementing a cross-sector methane reduction action plan.
- The oil and gas sector is the US's leading industrial source of methane emissions.
- Methane emissions are often accompanied by other pollutants like Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and benzene that contribute to ozone and air pollution.
- Investments in new technology can make it easier to monitor methane and reduce it.

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Methane Technology

- Swapping out old pneumatic controllers with zero-bleed ones can reduce methane and VOC emissions.
- Continuous monitoring technologies can help both regulators and oil and gas companies monitor and address methane leaks.
 - Furthermore, it helps companies get verified in the market for cleaner oil and gas.
- Routine Flaring: wastes natural gas in a time where energy security is an international concern; causes pollution and CO2 emissions; and still emits methane.
- The Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 is an effort attempting to align companies in terms of how they collect and share emissions data.

Methane Policy

- A new regulatory effort under the Clean Air Act strengthens standards for methane and VOC emissions and creates guidelines for establishing standards to limit methane from existing oil and gas sources.
- Methane Emissions Reduction Program: An Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) program that supplies significant resources to support methane monitoring and mitigation.
- Waste Emissions Charge: Another IRA program that provides incentive for oil and gas companies to reduce emissions specifically from high-emitting facilities.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) and National Energy Technology Lab (NETL) will be releasing a series of funding for programs aimed at methane emissions and reduction.
 - First in this series was \$350 million in formula grant funding announced for state programs like environmental restoration of abandoned well sites.
- Small/marginal gas wells account for approximately 6% of production in the US, but they account for half of emissions from wells.
 - Small/marginal wells will get regular inspections for leaks in a new supplemental to the Leak Protection and Repair Program.
- The Super Emitter Response Program (SERP) uses satellite information to collect data on large emission events. With this information, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can inform companies and create an obligation for them to respond to leaks.
- Challenges for the EPA include creating incentives to act on information and ensuring that the SERP program notifies the correct person in a company to address leaks.