



# The EPA's Dangerous New Methane Policy

**UNDER TRUMP, THE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING OUR AIR WILL ACTUALLY CREATE *MORE* POLLUTION.**

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**Annually, the EPA's two proposals could lead to:**

- **5 million metric tons of methane**
- **1.2 million metric tons of smog-forming VOCs**
- **Over 43,000 metric tons of hazardous air pollutants, like cancer-causing benzene**

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas. Over the next 20 years it will trap over 80 times more heat in our atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub>. The oil and gas industry is one of the nation's largest sources of methane.

According to research in the journal *Science*, U.S. oil and gas companies emit 13 million tons of methane a year — 60% more than official government estimates. It is enough gas to fuel 10 million homes for a year and is worth \$2 billion.

## **The EPA's existing clean air safeguards**

In 2012 and again in 2016, the EPA adopted new standards to reduce emissions from new oil and gas facilities. These protections limit methane emissions as well as smog-forming Volatile Organic Compounds using the same best technologies and practices.

The rules addressed new and modified equipment across the upstream (production, gathering and boosting, and processing) and midstream (transmission and storage) sectors. They are based on similar requirements from oil- and gas-producing states like Colorado and Wyoming, as well as the actions some leading companies use to reduce pollution.

The agency projected the 2016 standards would reduce 460,000 metric tons of methane, 190,000 metric tons of VOCs, and 3,500 metric tons of hazardous air pollutants by 2025, delivering net benefits of \$170 million.

## **The Trump EPA's proposal undermines clean air, creates additional pollution**

The new proposal seeks to:

- Eliminate all methane standards for new sources across the oil and gas supply chain.
- Exempt facilities in the transmission and storage segment from any federal standards.

- Prevent any future regulation of pollution from already existing oil and gas sources.

This proposal follows an [earlier EPA proposal](#) that significantly reduces the frequency of routine leak inspections. It also comes after two failed agency attempts to suspend the standards (the D.C. Circuit struck down one attempt and the agency abandoned the other).

The EPA's own analysis concludes the removal of these new source standards will produce more pollution from the transmission and storage of oil and gas. From 2019-2025 the proposal will cause:

- 340,000 metric tons methane.
- 9,100 metric tons of VOCs.
- 270 metric tons of hazardous air pollutants.

## **The cumulative impact**

Based on 2017 data, failing to regulate existing sources, removing standards for transmission and storage facilities and weakening current standards, as EPA has proposed, would result in 5 million metric tons of methane emissions annually that would be otherwise be reduced — more than a third of total methane from oil and gas operations, and enough gas to heat 4 million homes.

Combined, these two proposals could lead to an annual:

- 5 million metric tons of methane.
- 1.2 million metric tons of smog-forming VOCs.
- Over 43,000 metric tons of hazardous air pollutants, like cancer-causing benzene.

## **Companies urge the EPA to do more**

Shell, BP, ExxonMobil, and Equinor have all spoken in favor of the need for continued EPA methane regulation.