

New Methane Plans Are Regulation in Search of a Problem [1]

(DENVER) – In its rush to further regulate the oil and natural gas industry, the Obama Administration has proposed a plan to reduce oil and natural gas methane emissions 40 percent by 2025, despite the fact industry has voluntarily reduced methane emissions significantly even as production has soared. The proposed rules are especially redundant since the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is already implementing rules from 2012 that claim to deliver methane emission reductions.

Given the emphasis from the White House, one might think methane emissions were on the rise, but in fact, emissions from the oil and natural gas industry have been steadily decreasing for the past several years. According to [EPA's Greenhouse Gas \(GHG\) inventory](#) [2], industry methane emissions have decreased 12 percent since 2011, and emissions from fracking have decreased by 73 percent. Natural gas production increased by 26 percent between 2006 and 2012 while methane emissions from production facilities decreased by over 40 percent. The majority of these reductions were the result of voluntary actions and innovation by industry.

“The President’s plan is another case of the Administration adding new red tape to make mandatory what industry has been doing voluntarily for several years,” said Kathleen Sgamma, vice president of government and public affairs. “Natural gas companies have already greatly reduced emissions from the wellhead even as production has soared. In turn, that huge supply of natural gas enables the U.S. to substantially reduce GHGs from its largest source, electricity generation, which vastly outweighs the small emissions from production facilities. By imposing costly regulations on a small source of emissions, the Administration is losing sight of a real climate change solution while continuing to choke out a source of economic growth.

“Further, proposed Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rules on flaring and venting are a convoluted way to tackle an issue, but then, this Administration’s first reaction is always to pile on more red tape. Rates of flaring on public lands exceed those on private lands because it takes BLM so long to approve the Rights of Way necessary before gas gathering lines can be installed. By simply processing ROWs in a timely manner, BLM could reduce flaring in the very near term, rather than going through a long, drawn out rulemaking process. We hope to see common-sense legislation similar to bills (S. 2112 and H.R. 4293) from Senator Barrasso (R-WY) and Congressman Cramer (R-ND) in the last Congress that would expedite ROWs and get on with increasing natural gas capture rates on public lands,” concluded Sgamma.

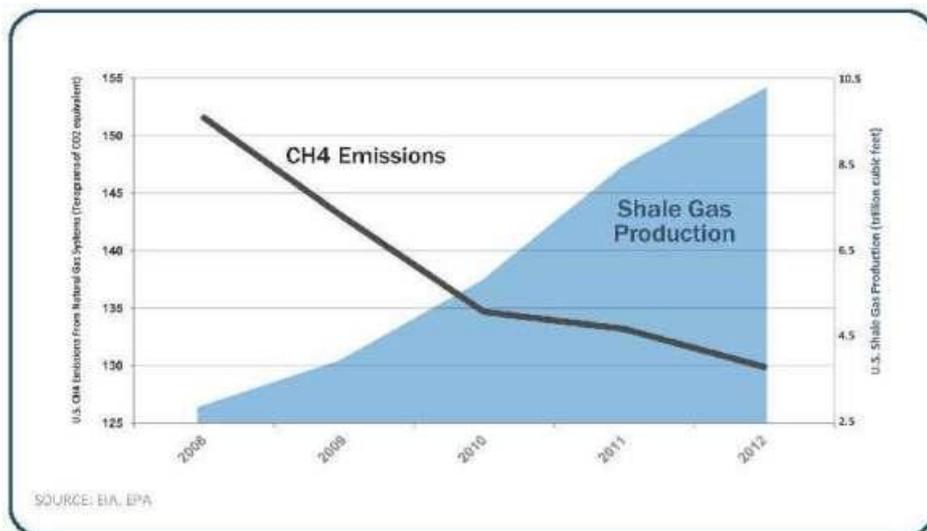


Chart credit: [Energy in Depth](#) [3]

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