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BLM Rule Ignores Significant Market-Driven Methane Reductions ^[1]

- Through technological innovation, producers have greatly reduced methane emissions
- Industry's success shows redundant federal regulations are not necessary
- Natural gas industry delivering greater greenhouse gas reductions than others

DENVER – The proposed rule announced today by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reduce venting and flaring from oil and natural gas operations is redundant with state efforts and lacks justification. Instead of new federal regulations, BLM could do more to support President Obama's climate change goals by encouraging natural gas development and recognizing industry's success reducing emissions.

"We support the goal of capturing greater quantities of methane and reducing waste gas, but a command-and-control regulatory approach is not the most effective way to meet that goal, particularly one that exceeds BLM's jurisdiction," said Kathleen Sgamma, vice president of government and public affairs at [Western Energy Alliance](#) ^[2].

"Industry has achieved dramatic emission reductions without federal regulations. Through technological innovation driven by market forces, industry has greatly increased gas capture and reduced leakage rates. Since 1990, oil and natural gas producers have decreased [methane emissions](#) ^[3] by 21 percent even as natural gas production has climbed 47 percent—all without federal regulation. Our industry is no longer the largest man-made source of U.S. methane emissions. The new BLM regulation is simply another case of a federal government fix to something that's already working well.

"In fact, the oil and natural gas industry has delivered more greenhouse gas reductions than any other industry or government climate change program, as dramatic increases in U.S. production have enabled switching to natural gas electricity generation. But we're not resting on our success. North Dakota companies have invested over \$11 billion to put in place the pipelines, gas gathering lines, and other infrastructure necessary to capture natural gas from oil wells, and have increased the gas capture rate from 64 percent in 2011 to 85 percent today. As the Bakken continues to mature, that gas capture rate will continue to climb. In Wyoming, with its more mature plays, the overall venting and flaring rate is a mere 0.26 percent.

"Often delays in obtaining the rights-of-way required before pipelines and gas gathering lines can be constructed lead to high flaring rates. Rather than a long, drawn-out rulemaking, BLM could reduce venting and flaring rates *tomorrow* simply by approving permits for gas capture lines after years of delay," concluded Sgamma. "By proposing emissions controls on existing wells, BLM is attempting unlawful Clean Air Act regulation that even EPA doesn't try to assert."

For additional background on venting and flaring performed by the oil and natural gas industry, visit the Alliance's [flaring webpage](#) ^[4] and [position paper](#) ^[5].

Details on the climate benefits of natural gas are available on the Alliance's [methane webpage](#) ^[6].

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[1] <https://www.westernenergyalliance.org/press-room/blm-rule-ignores-significant-market-driven-methane-reductions>

[2] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/>

[3] <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/Downloads/ghgemissions/US-GHG-Inventory-2015-Main-Text.pdf>

[4] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/knowledge-center/air/flaring>

[5] http://cdn.westernenergyalliance.org/sites/default/files/Western%20Energy%20Alliance%20Position%20Paper%20-%20BLM%20Venting%20and%20Flaring%20Rule_0.pdf

[6] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/knowledge-center/air/methane>