



Methane Mitigation: Making New Mexico a Leader in Clean Energy Production

New Mexico is an energy producing state and oil and gas production is a key pillar. Under my Administration, we will move aggressively to renewable energies such as solar and wind. However, whatever our source of energy, we need to make sure that cleaner energy production is our goal. To achieve this with oil and gas development, I will work to make New Mexico a national leader in methane mitigation, an investment in our state's energy infrastructure that will create quality jobs, increase revenue for our schools, protect the health of workers and communities and reduce carbon and methane emissions that threaten our climate.

As Governor, I will work with business and conservation leaders to implement common sense statewide rules to cut methane waste and pollution at both new and existing wells. A state methane rule is a win-win that protects public health through cleaner, more efficient energy production that captures methane waste and pollution while it creates jobs and generates revenue for the state. We can and must capture wasted methane gas and put it to work for New Mexico.

Millions in Revenue for our Schools

One of New Mexico's primary exports is natural gas of which methane is the main component. An estimated \$180-\$240 million per year in New Mexico's natural gas is currently being wasted due to venting, flaring and leaks according to the best scientific estimates and industry's self-reported data. If captured, this is enough gas to provide the heating and cooking needs for every home in New Mexico for a year and produce an additional \$27 million per year in tax and royalty revenue for our state, which can be directly invested in urgent needs like our public schools. As an example, this is enough revenue to increase state enrollment in pre-K programs by 50 percent and give an additional 5,000 New Mexico kids access to quality early childhood education.

There are proven, cost effective fixes that that could eliminate up to half of this lost methane with just a few simple steps. We can implement regular inspections to find and fix leaks, create new incentives and requirements to use cost-effective technologies, such as infrared cameras, that reduce emissions, and foster the development of innovative technologies and approaches to catalyze New Mexico's developing methane mitigation industry. The first step is bringing together stakeholders to find solutions that are right for New Mexico. Working together we can dramatically cut the waste, and natural gas that isn't wasted can be used or sold, to the benefit of New Mexico schools.

New, Good Paying Jobs

According to a report from the consulting firm, Datu Research, New Mexico is ranked #10 in the nation for jobs focused on tackling methane emissions. We can do better. Colorado ranks #3 and Wyoming #7 for these jobs because they have acted aggressively to reduce methane waste. New Mexico will do the same if we act with strong, sensible regulations.

Methane mitigation and cleaner energy production will create good, new jobs in New Mexico. For example, jobs in the Leak, Detection, and Repair (LDAR) industry promise upward mobility with annual salaries ranging from \$27,040 to \$113,110 per year. Datu Research also found that companies in the methane mitigation sector have already experienced up to 30 percent business growth in states with methane regulations.

And these are good jobs for New Mexicans. For example, Dexter Field Services – a nationwide provider of LDAR services that is also active in New Mexico – reports an estimated 40% of employees are persons of color. Most of their hiring is done locally in client locations, so the firm’s diversity is explained in part by the fact that employees’ represent the local communities in which they work. For instance, they report that one crew serving clients in New Mexico predominantly has technicians of Native American origin.

Fighting Climate Change

Failure to capture methane, a greenhouse gas, is an environmental threat to our state. In 2014, Scientists from NASA and the University of Michigan discovered the most concentrated plume of methane pollution anywhere in the country over northwest New Mexico’s San Juan Basin. Further research from NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has shown that the vast majority of this methane pollution is attributable to oil and gas development.

Protecting the health of our workers and communities

Methane mitigation will also better protect the health of New Mexicans and clean up our air. When methane is emitted, so are toxins such as benzene that cause cancer as well as other smog-forming pollutants that can lead to respiratory diseases and childhood asthma attacks. A state methane rule protects New Mexicans' health by dramatically cutting methane leaks and other pollutants emitted during oil and gas development.

Working with the private sector

A handful of New Mexico’s leading oil and gas producers are already taking steps to reduce their methane pollution including major oil and gas operators like ExxonMobil, XTO Energy and BP and I applaud this action.

The oil and gas industry has invested more than \$13 billion in southeastern New Mexico's Permian Basin this year, creating a new drilling boom. While some of those drillers have committed to measures to limit methane waste and pollution, we have a long way to go. We need consistent standards to limit the amount of methane gas and other pollution leaked, vented, or flared from oil and gas facilities statewide to ensure New Mexico reaps the full benefit from the production of our natural resources.

As governor, my administration will work with New Mexico's oil and gas producers to adopt sensible mitigation technologies and practices and make New Mexico a model for cleaner energy production. We know common sense rules to cut methane work. Colorado has already proven the case.

Three years ago, Colorado became the first state in the U.S. to adopt a statewide rule that directly regulates methane emissions with the support of individual oil and gas producers and environmental groups. Now, the state health department reported that leaks in the Denver-Julesburg Basin – the state's most heavily developed oil and gas field – have [decreased by 75%](#) as natural gas increased. Colorado achieved these reductions even as natural gas increased 6 percent, oil production increased more than 60 percent, and the number of wells grew by 5 percent. More production, more wells, and greater efficiency in the oil and gas industry means more jobs and economic development.

Since that ground-breaking methane rule was adopted environmental groups, the Colorado Oil and Gas Association, and the Colorado Petroleum Association have worked collaboratively to strengthen standards and cut air pollution for millions of residents. We can achieve the same success here at home. Government, business, and stakeholders can work together to find a solution that's right for New Mexico. We will cut the waste of our natural resources, ensure a fair return to taxpayers and our schools all the while creating the jobs of the future and improving New Mexico's air quality. Together, we can make it happen.