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U.S. Gas Industry Claims Are False: Analysis of IEA Methane Tracker Finds U.S. Oil & Gas Sector Lags Behind Eighteen Other Countries on Emissions Intensity



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U.S. Gas Industry Claims Are False: Analysis of IEA Methane Tracker Finds U.S. Oil & Gas Sector Lags Behind Eighteen Other Countries on Emissions Intensity

WASHINGTON, DC – The United States is the world’s top methane emitter from oil and gas. Despite the U.S. fossil fuel industry’s [repeated claims](#) to have the “[cleanest gas in the world](#)”, a new Oil Change International (OCI) analysis of the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) 2024 global methane emissions data reveals the truth for the first time: **U.S. methane intensity lags behind 18 other countries.**

Methane intensity is the ratio of total methane emissions to total oil and gas production. OCI used the data sheet accompanying the IEA’s methane tracker report and country-level oil and gas production data from Rystad Energy to calculate the methane emissions intensity of oil and gas production for the world’s oil and gas producers. Ranking countries from lowest to highest, we find that the **U.S. ranks 19th among the top 50 oil and gas-producing countries.**

As the world’s largest oil and gas producer, this relatively high methane emissions intensity translates into a staggeringly huge amount of planet-destroying methane. **America’s oil and gas sector emits more methane than any other.** The IEA estimates 2023 methane emissions from America’s oil and gas infrastructure at nearly **13.8 million metric tons**.¹ This equates to nearly **1.2 billion tons of CO2 equivalent (CO2e), as much as 301 coal plants**.²

While cleaning up methane could be crucial in slowing the ongoing climate crisis, it cannot replace the fundamental role of phasing out fossil fuels.

The science is clear that to maintain a livable planet, we need to produce and consume less oil, gas, and coal tomorrow than we do today. The IEA's Net Zero Scenario, which provides a roadmap for maintaining the 1.5oC goal, requires a 20% reduction in gas by 2030 and an 80% reduction by 2050. This projection incorporates a 75% reduction in methane emissions from oil and gas by 2030, a goal that the industry has failed to make progress toward.

Lorne Stockman, Research Director, Oil Change International, said:

"Our analysis is further proof of the massive destructive impact of America's oil and gas industry. Far from being a leader, the US lags behind nearly twenty other countries. This impact is increasing with every new oil and gas well, every new pipeline, and every new gas plant. That methane emissions are increasing with rising production makes a mockery of so-called certified gas. This greenwashing scam must end so we can focus on phasing out oil and gas rather than the distraction of cleaner, greener, sustainable, or responsibly sourced."

The Dangerous Role of Certified Gas

IEA data reveals that **U.S. oil and gas sector methane emissions are rising in lockstep with rising gas production, contradicting the industry's own reports that methane intensity is decreasing, and revealing companies may under-report by as much as 95%**. Oil and gas methane emissions grew 4% from 2022 levels, which is roughly aligned with production growth.³

Meanwhile, some **lobbyists claim** certifications by a handful of startup companies prove U.S. suppliers are reducing emissions. They are referring to "certified gas" schemes that now purportedly cover up to 30% of U.S. gas and which have **come under**

[scrutiny](#) for their lofty claims and lack of accountability. But as emissions are still growing in line with production, gas certification is clearly failing and is fundamentally a marketing tool rather than an effective strategy for cleaning up oil and gas. Reducing fossil fuel consumption and phase-out is the only way to [reduce](#) climate pollution.

The IEA recognized the issues stemming from the proliferation of competing methane measurement, monitoring, verification, and reporting (MMRV) products and services, including those offered by U.S. gas certification companies like MiQ and Project Canary. The IEA highlights explicitly an “[emerging risk that the proliferation of new standards could lead to inconsistencies and confusion](#)” and calls for greater transparency.

###

Background

Data sheet for reference is [here](#).

Footnotes

1. This includes emissions from all stages of production, processing and transportation (pipelines) as well as exports (LNG terminals) and end-user equipment including power plants, boilers and gas stoves among others. Our intensity ratio calculator excluded end-use sector emissions in order to paint an accurate picture of US gas exports.
2. Methane is at least 85 times more potent than CO₂ on a 20-year basis. Coal plant equivalents derived from the [EPA GHG Equivalencies Calculator](#)
3. From direct communication with IEA staff. The IEA updated its methodology leading to slightly lower estimates of oil and gas methane emissions for previous years

compared with last year's data. When comparing U.S. data from last year's tracker with this year's, the apparent emissions reduction is misleading. As IEA has not yet published previous years' country level data using this year's methodology, we requested a figure for U.S. oil and gas methane in 2022 using this year's methodology to understand how much of the apparent reduction was due to methodology revisions over improved performance. The IEA stated in an email that estimated U.S. emissions from oil and gas operations (excluding end-use sectors) was 12.8Mt using this year's methodology. For 2023, this figure is 13.3 Mt, a 4% increase.

One Comment

Allan Weiss says:

May 16, 2024 at 7:42 pm

The pollution we MUST get rid of extends to our very Government. It is cloaked in the advocacy of it's own CORRUPTION. Both major political parties have brought us to the place we now occupy, and have been jointly complicit for years in this unwarranted conspiracy. They have succeeded in this conspiracy, because they are GOVERNMENT, and have the power to change rules and regulations through the barter system, that is always in play at the Congressional level, should

they have need of the House and/or Senate to achieve their sometimes undesirable goals.

The above is written by an unprejudiced, educated, retired successful businessman of eighty-five, with children, grandchildren and great grandchildren that I care deeply about. Who, or what does our illustrious Government care about, other than personal accumulation of the DOLLARS, sometimes at the expense of those they have taken an OATH to DEFEND and PROTECT from FOREIGN and DOMESTIC enemies of our NATION.

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