America should follow Colorado’s lead and reduce methane pollution from the oil and natural gas industry

*Colorado is a national leader in cleaning up methane pollution—a senseless waste of a valuable energy resource that also harms public health and contributes to climate change. Now the rest of the country should follow.*

**Colorado took action**

- In 2014 Colorado became the first state in the nation to directly regulate methane pollution from the oil and natural gas industry. Colorado’s rules include stringent measures to detect and repair leaks, and minimize venting and flaring.
- **Since the rules were adopted, Colorado’s economic growth has exceeded projections.** The state regulations demonstrate that smart environmental policy can go hand in hand with economic growth.

**Methane leaks are an unnecessary waste**

- Oil and natural gas producers in Colorado wasted nearly 250,000 metric tons of methane in 2013, before the state’s rules were put into place.
- This is almost enough to meet the heating and cooking needs all of the homes in Colorado Springs for a year, and nearly equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions of about 1.3 million cars.

**Methane pollution puts Colorado families at risk**

- When methane is released into the air, so too are harmful pollutants that have significant public health consequences. This includes toxic chemicals like benzene, which are linked to cancer, and other smog-forming pollutants that can trigger asthma.
- The increased warming caused by methane also sparks a domino effect, as warming increases ground-level ozone levels that can also lead to asthma.
- **More than 3 million Coloradans** live in areas where ozone levels exceed national clean air standards — areas that also contain more than 14,000 oil and gas wells. Eleven counties across Colorado exceeded the national ozone standard during **31 days** in 2013.

**Colorado companies can fix the problem**

- Using available technology, the oil and gas industry can **cost-effectively cut methane pollution** in half over the next few years.
- Colorado ranks 3rd in the nation for companies that manufacture, sell, and support methane control technologies – it is home to 19 of these companies, the majority of which are small businesses. Additionally, four companies in this industry have manufacturing plants in the state.

**Methane pollution is threatening the climate**

- Curbing methane pollution is critical because it is over **80 times more potent than carbon dioxide** in the first 20 years after its release, and is already responsible for a quarter of man-made warming.
- If federal action isn’t taken, methane pollution from the oil and natural gas industry is projected to **increase around 25 percent** nationally over the next 10 years.

**Methane pollution is a national problem that requires a national response.**

- Colorado is a leader in reducing methane pollution and should support strong federal efforts to cut methane nationally and level the playing field.
- The Obama administration recently announced a suite of actions, including direct national regulation of methane pollution from the oil and gas industry, and standards to cut wasteful venting and flaring on federal lands.
- **Now EPA and BLM need to move forward** to reduce pollution and ensure the oil and gas industry is minimizing waste and abiding by consistent and crucial clean air requirements.
- **National methane pollution rules are vital to better protecting the health of Coloradans and all Americans.**