

Natural Gas Flaring in Colorado

Colorado has led the nation in cutting methane pollution, but efforts to curb flaring have not kept pace.

Colorado has been a leader on protective oil and gas regulations, as the first state to directly regulate methane emissions in 2014. Colorado further raised the bar with updated methane and ozone regulation in 2017 and again in 2019, and by establishing nation-leading rules for well integrity in 2019.

However, the state's venting and flaring regulation under the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) has not kept pace.

Stopping waste, cutting pollution and protecting public health

Recently passed legislation (SB 181) directs the COGCC to regulate in a way that protects public health, safety, welfare, the environment and wildlife. It also directs the agency to minimize waste. Eliminating routine flaring is critical for the COGCC to meet these statutory mandates.

The COGCC can act boldly and enact tough flaring regulations this year to stop the waste of valuable natural gas resources. Outdated practices currently allow for more than \$12 million worth of valuable Colorado natural gas resources (nearly 4.6 billion cubic feet of gas) to be vented or flared – simply released or burned off at the well site – every year.

Meanwhile, flaring also contributes to air pollution that harms public health and the environment.

- Flaring emissions contain methane and CO₂ that contribute to climate change.
- Flaring also contributes to ozone pollution, toxic air pollution and regional haze.

Communities need commonsense solutions

Colorado regulators can end this wasteful, dirty practice by enacting commonsense requirements, such as a strict prohibition on routine flaring and a flat prohibition on venting at all times for both new and existing wells throughout the state.

This waste problem is highly concentrated in certain parts of the state.

- 83% of all gas produced in Jackson county is flared, the highest percentage in Colorado
- Lincoln County at 24% and Delta County at 13% also highlight problem areas or hot spots of flaring that can and should be addressed.

In other counties, flaring volumes and percentages are far lower, highlighting the opportunity for COGCC to enact fair, across-the-board requirements to limit this wasteful practice.

County	1,000 Cubic Feet of Flared Gas (McF)	Total # of Flares	% Gas Flared (based on production)
Weld	2,237,262	921	0.2%
Jackson	1,766,526	63	82.6%
Moffat	315,413	37	3.3%
Arapaho	227,048	88	3.6%
Lincoln	91,848	65	23.5%
Rio Blanco	81,194	427	0.1%
Delta	56,409	1	12.7
Montezuma	51,138	8	0.01%

TAKE ACTION. The COGCC is accepting written public comment on its 900 Series/flaring rulemaking until Oct. 20 at 12pm. Submit your written comments online at: [EDF.org/2020COflaring](https://www.edf.org/2020COflaring)

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