

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

*Hearing on “Protecting Clean American Energy Production and Jobs by Stopping EPA’s Overreach”*

**January 10, 2024**

Today we are examining the Environmental Protection Agency’s actions to address methane pollution from the oil and gas industry. These actions are critical to protecting the health of our communities, fighting the worsening climate crisis, creating jobs, driving innovation, and delivering clean, affordable, and reliable energy to American families. EPA’s methane policies are long overdue. They are in line with the statutory requirements of the Clean Air Act and complement the historic climate investments Democrats delivered with the Inflation Reduction Act.

Methane is a potent climate-disrupting greenhouse gas that is responsible for about one-third of the warming we are facing today. And at a time when our nation is experiencing a \$1 billion or more extreme weather event every three weeks, it is critical that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions like methane to tackle this climate crisis.

And science tells us the greatest and most cost-effective way to curb methane pollution over the next decade is to tackle it in the fossil fuel sector. After all, the oil and gas sector is the largest industrial source of methane emissions in the United States. Without bold action to curb these emissions, methane pollution will continue to cause significant harm to public health, threaten the stability of our economy, and compromise the well-being of our communities and planet now and into the future.

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA has a responsibility and obligation to protect Americans from this dangerous climate pollution. That is why actions to dramatically curb methane by Congressional Democrats and the Biden Administration are so important. Two years ago, the Democrats’ Inflation Reduction Act established the Methane Emissions Reduction Program to control excess methane pollution from the oil and gas industry. This landmark new program holds individual companies responsible for their own leaks and wasted methane while recognizing the cleanest performers. It is going to drive innovation, create new good-paying jobs, and support projects to protect our communities from the climate crisis.

The Inflation Reduction Act also required EPA to update emissions reporting requirements for large oil and gas facilities. These disclosure requirements are a necessity considering the well-documented history of underreporting. They will help ensure the oil and gas industry is more transparent and held accountable for excess pollution.

The EPA has also taken bold action with a final methane rule for oil and gas operations that will control pollution from existing methane sources for the first time. The final rule was released last month at COP28. It includes comprehensive leak monitoring requirements, expands the use of innovative new monitoring technologies, eliminates routine flaring from new sources, and responds to longstanding challenges such as super-emitters. This EPA action is expected to dramatically cut methane emissions by 80 percent by 2038, which will result in more than \$97 billion in net benefits.

As we have seen throughout the history of the Clean Air Act, controlling pollution is not a zero-sum game – and controlling methane is no different. Ambitiously addressing methane can yield tremendous climate, public health, and financial benefits across the economy. From meaningful job creation in the methane mitigation industry, to spurring innovation in new and cost-effective technologies, to consumer benefits from less wasted gas – controlling methane pollution is a win for Americans.

Yet time and again, House Republicans have ignored these benefits and prioritized their polluters over people agenda. They have tried to undermine and repeal critical climate programs despite benefits to communities in their districts. They have attacked the Biden Administration for proposing commonsense regulations to address climate pollution from the oil and gas industry. And while Republicans tout an “all of the above” energy approach, they continue to push back against policies that accelerate clean energy development and reduce emissions.

At COP28 the international community rallied around accelerating efforts to control methane pollution, with the United States leading by example. And that is why Republican efforts to undermine EPA’s methane protections are so dangerous. The Republican agenda compromises America’s global leadership and threatens our global competitiveness.

Democrats understand the urgency to act. Our Inflation Reduction Act is already creating new jobs, cutting costs for working families, and advancing homegrown clean energy – all while tackling the climate crisis. The down payment in these laws, along with the strong regulatory framework proposed by the Biden Administration, will complement our nation’s international efforts.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.