



COMMITTEE ON

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas

Full Committee Hearing—Detecting and Quantifying Methane Emissions from the Oil & Gas Sector

June 8, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson.

We're here today to discuss methane emissions and how to measure and address them. This is a complex problem, largely due to technological limitations and regulatory barriers.

Compared to our ability to quantify carbon dioxide emissions, we lack knowledge and tools to measure methane in an accurate, timely, and cost-effective way. That in turn makes it hard to address sources of emissions.

But that is starting to change, and we are beginning to recognize methane is what I call a low-hanging fruit.

It's a short-lived climate pollutant, so as we work to remove the emission of carbon from crucial industries, the ability to identify and plug methane leaks is a quick and effective way to slow the rising global temperature.

The good news is that our energy industry has already made significant progress to reduce emissions in oil and gas operations. To give you an idea of their success to date, methane emissions in the United States have decreased by 17 percent since 1990. That's all the more impressive given that during that same time period, U.S. Natural Gas Marketed Production has increased by 99 percent.

We're producing more energy with fewer emissions. Much like our reductions in carbon dioxide, innovation has and will continue to be the better driver of action than regulations and prohibitions.

Simply put: we don't need to tax or ban methane in any way. We simply need to cut red tape and allow the energy, agriculture, and waste industries to use the breakthrough technologies being developed and refined every day.

And that leads us to a major roadblock when it comes to methane research and development: regulatory burdens. For far too long, EPA regulations have stood squarely in the way of technology deployment.

As it stands right now, any operator that wants to use a technology other than a handheld Optical Gas Imaging sensor must complete and submit an application for Alternative Means of Emission Limitation (AMEL).

But a massive problem arises when you ask how many AMEL applications have been approved for methane monitoring technologies. The answer is zero. None.

In fact, it's such a tedious process, only one application has ever been submitted.

And *if* you are lucky enough to be the first to get this coveted approval, it doesn't make your future prospects any easier. If granted approval to use a new methane monitoring in the Permian Basin, an operator would have to reapply and go through the entire process again to use that exact same technology at a different site, even if it was just down the road.

This, my friends, is the very definition of bureaucratic ignorance.

Energy prices are at record highs. Now is not the time for more virtue-signaling regulations. We need to support cleaner American energy by empowering industry and encouraging innovative technologies.

And yet, President Biden and the EPA recently proposed a new methane rule that creates additional unnecessary government mandates and fails to streamline the process for private companies to deploy innovative technologies.

This heavy-handed, regulatory approach will be even more of a burden on domestic producers. All the while, these policies are doing nothing to alleviate sky-high energy prices, even as the price of natural gas is projected to increase by 30% for the average household this winter.

Despite my frustration with this Administration's failure to address energy prices and flawed approach to emissions reductions, there is still reason to be optimistic. One of them is with us today, Dr. Greg Rieker and LongPath Technologies.

While working at NIST, Dr. Rieker completed the proof-of-concept research that takes Noble Prize-winning laser technology and applies it to a long-term, scalable emissions control.

LongPath has since gone on to receive two different ARPA-E awards from the Department of Energy. LongPath's work has been blind-tested, verified, and commercialized. It is a very real success story of utilizing the proper channels of federal resources and then letting the market determine its fate.

I look forward to hearing more from Dr. Rieker about LongPath's story, technology applications, and how we can better enable more successes like this in the future.

Thank you Madam Chair and I yield back the balance of my time.