



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
CLIMATE CRISIS

**Opening Statement of Chair Kathy Castor
Hearing on “Cutting Methane Pollution:
Safeguarding Health, Creating Jobs, and Protecting Our Climate”
June 24, 2022**

As prepared for delivery

Welcome to Part 2 of our hearing series on methane, the second largest source of heat-trapping pollution and a major contributor to the climate crisis. Last week, we discussed state perspectives on cutting methane pollution and waste from the oil and gas sector. This week, we’ll discuss how slashing methane will help us safeguard public health, create family-sustaining jobs, and improve lives across the nation.

It’s clear that we need federal action to reduce methane pollution from the oil and gas sector, which remains the largest industrial source in the United States. According to a Majority Staff Report from the House Science Committee, oil and gas companies are routinely failing to address super-emitting leaks. Deployment of technologies to find and repair leaks is limited and inconsistent. In order to fix this, it’s crucial that the federal government holds producers accountable for wasteful leaks, as well as harmful practices like venting and flaring. Unless we step up our work, American families will continue to face the costly harms posed by this super-pollutant.

The health risks associated with methane pollution are clear. Americans living near oil and natural gas production suffer more asthma attacks, as well as other lung and heart problems. Living near oil and gas wells can be dangerous to pregnant women, causing lower birth weights and preterm births. In too many cases, these harms fall on frontline communities, including communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, but these outcomes are entirely avoidable.

There are ample technologies available to help producers cut methane in cost-effective ways. These include continuous monitoring technologies; handheld optical imaging sensors that use infrared light; satellites that detect plumes from individual sites; and technologies to cleanly combust methane on site. Deploying these technologies would allow the oil and gas sector to slash its methane emissions in half at no net cost. This is low-hanging fruit. These technologies can reduce waste and help save producers and customers money. But we need more companies to take advantage of them. Strong methane regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency to address the industry’s wasteful methane leaks will help drive innovation, enhance deployment, and create jobs.

We’re getting help from the Biden administration. Last week, along with the European Union and others, President Biden helped launch the Global Methane Pledge Energy Pathway, a commitment to drive down methane pollution in the oil and gas sector, and to eliminate routine

flaring as soon as possible. The President is also committed to slashing methane emissions in half by 2030. And his proposed EPA rule would reduce methane emissions by roughly 41 million tons through 2035.

House Democrats have also taken action. In the Energy Act of 2020, we included improvements to natural gas pipeline safety, as well as requirements for minimum performance standards, strict deadlines, and use of advanced technologies to find and repair methane leaks. Last year, we passed a bipartisan resolution rejecting the Trump administration's attempt to weaken methane safeguards. And through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we invested \$4.7 billion to help states and tribes plug and remediate abandoned oil and gas wells. We also increased funding for reclaiming abandoned mine lands, modernizing natural gas pipelines, and addressing undocumented orphaned wells. The House-passed reconciliation bill included a methane fee to address this wasteful pollution. And the House-passed Bipartisan Innovation Act included provisions to help states repair and replace leaky natural gas distribution pipelines.

Cutting harmful methane pollution will protect public health and the climate. It will catalyze the growth of new small businesses. And it will create tens of thousands of new jobs. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses as we bring these cost-saving benefits to more American communities.