

Study examines methane emissions reduction from oil and gas in North America

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Atmospheric methane concentrations continue to increase globally, despite a pledge in 2016 from the leaders of the United States, Canada, and Mexico to reduce methane emissions from each country's oil and gas sector. Additionally, the trilateral methane pledge faces more challenges as the Trump Administration seeks to reverse federal methane research and control efforts.

Yet this ambitious pledge is still achievable in the United States, according to a new article in *Climate Policy* co-authored by Dr. Sarah Marie Jordaan, Assistant Professor of Energy, Resources and Environment at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and Kate Konschnik, lead author and Director of the Climate and Energy Program at Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions.

The researchers suggest that estimating emissions consistently across U.S. jurisdictions in support of a robust baseline will help the North American countries to achieve the goal by 2025, if coupled with science-based, economically sound policies to minimize [methane](#) leakage.

"It is critical—for both the development of the sector and the environment—that decision-makers in government and industry rely not only on politics and economics, but also scientific evidence," Dr. Jordaan said. "We have developed a coherent framework that integrates science and policy to help decision-makers to do just that, in support of both economic and environmental goals."

Konschnik noted that the climate benefits of using natural gas rather than coal to generate electricity evaporate if [methane leakage](#) across the natural gas value chain is too high. "Agencies and industry can tackle methane emissions more effectively by monitoring technological advances in this field, and generating data for future research," she said.

The scholars surveyed efforts to estimate and mitigate [methane emissions](#) in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. They propose a North American Methane Reduction Framework to integrate public and private research and mitigation policies.

More information: "Reducing Fugitive Methane Emissions from the North American Oil and Gas Sector: Proposing a Science-Policy Framework," *Climate Policy* [DOI: 10.1080/14693062.2018.1427538](https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2018.1427538)

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