

EPA plans to abandon regulations on methane emissions, reports say

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Derrick and platform of drilling gas wells in Marcellus Shale - Pennsylvania.
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The Trump administration is expected to announce a proposal to ease

methane emission regulations in the oil and gas sector on Thursday, according to reports by the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.

The Environmental Protection Agency will reportedly propose abandoning federal rules that require the oil and [gas industry](#) to install technology that monitors and curbs methane leaks in wells, pipelines and other operational facilities. The rollback, which has also been opposed by some major oil and [gas companies](#), marks President Donald Trump's latest effort to dismantle Obama-era [environmental regulations](#) that were put in place to confront climate change.

Methane is the core component of natural gas and its emissions are a known accelerator of global warming. Leaks release the powerful greenhouse gas—one that is several times more harmful than carbon dioxide and traps more heat—into the atmosphere.

Powerful oil and gas companies, including Exxon Mobil, Shell and BP, have objected to the EPA's efforts to relax federal rules on emissions standards. At an annual energy conference in March, Shell's U.S. Country Chair Gretchen Watkins urged the EPA to regulate methane emissions as a climate concern.

"We don't usually tell governments how to do their job but we're ready to break with that and say, 'Actually, we want to tell you how to do your job,'" Watkins said in an interview with Reuters .

BP American chairman and president Susan Dio also explained in an op-ed for the *Houston Chronicle* following the conference that BP advocates for direct federal regulation of [methane](#) emissions because the company supports natural gas as a source of energy over coal. She added that the more gas BP can keep in its equipment, the more it can push to the market for business.

Methane leaks have long been a major concern of environmental groups for their plant-warming effects and the EPA's anticipated proposal is expected to see pushback.

"The Trump EPA is eager to give the oil and gas industry a free pass to keep leaking enormous amounts of climate pollution into the air. We simply cannot protect our children and grandchildren from climate catastrophe if EPA lets this industry off scot-free. If EPA moves forward with this reckless and sinister proposal, we will see them in court," said David Doniger, a director at the Natural Resources Defense Council, in a statement Thursday.

The EPA rule would require a period of public comment and review, and would likely be finalized early next year, the *New York Times* reported.

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