



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Reducing Methane to Protect Our Health and Our Planet

“Methane is in the category of short-term climate forcers, which means it doesn’t stay in the atmosphere very long, but while it’s there, it’s very strong at trapping heat. When you look at it over a 20-year time frame, it’s over **80 times more powerful at heat trapping** than carbon dioxide (CO₂)... Because of its short-term effects, if we’re able to reduce enough methane emissions, we can really start to bend that curve of greenhouse gas emissions that will hopefully stave off the most catastrophic impacts of climate change while we are continuing to address the longer-term climate forcers like CO₂.” (Bill O’Neill, *Environmental Defense Fund* (EDF), Special Report, Winter 2021-22 in an interview with Dan Grossman, EDF attorney)

Where does methane come from? It comes mostly from landfills, agriculture (including confined animal feed operations), oil, and gas.

What is effective about the work of EDF is that they bring to the table business industries, government, environmental groups, and a legal team. They recognize the importance of partnerships. “We certainly recognize the urgency of the problems that we’re facing, but we still think that it’s critical to take the time to talk to industry, to talk to environmental justice communities, to talk to farmers and ranchers and ... find those small but important pieces of common ground that we can build on” (Dan Grossman, EDF attorney).

For example, in Colorado, with the help of the governor and EDF, three of the state’s leading oil and gas industries came together to learn about methane emissions, and “how they could improve their methane performance while still being able to operate in a profitable way.” As a result, regulations were put into place requiring facilities to “inspect for leaks using the best available technology, and requiring that storage tanks at oil and gas facilities be designed in a way that would ensure that 95% of the gas is captured.... which resulted in hundreds of thousands of tons of methane being saved.” (Dan Grossman) **The hopeful news for us is that, using Colorado as a model, Pennsylvania (and Ohio) are also on track to regulate methane emissions.**

In 2023, EDF will launch **MethaneSAT**, a satellite that will be able to “pinpoint methane emissions anywhere across the globe, which will hold not only countries, but also companies accountable” (Dan Grossman). **Regulators will know where the emissions are coming from.**

“The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued proposed rules to dramatically reduce methane emissions from both existing and new gas and oil wells and infrastructure nationwide. This is good news – but we know there will be strong opposition to the new rules and efforts to water them down. [Tell the EPA you support the commonsense regulations they proposed – and that EPA should go even further to protect our health and the planet.](#)”

This is our moment to speak up. Methane has a massive impact on our climate, and leaking wells can also release toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and particulate matter into the air, putting families at risk of everything from lung and heart conditions to various cancers. **People must always come before polluters.**” (Climate Reality Project)