



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Extends Comment Period on Proposed Rule To Reduce Methane Emissions, Wasted Gas on Public, Tribal Lands

In response to requests from the public, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has extended the public comment period until April 22, 2016, for the recently proposed Methane and Waste Prevention Rule, which would update 30-year-old regulations to reduce the wasteful release of natural gas into the atmosphere from oil and gas operations on public and American Indian lands.

The BLM released the proposed rule on January 22, 2016, and provided the public 60 days to comment on the proposal from the date it appeared in the Federal Register on February 8, 2016. The BLM conducted public outreach meetings in 2014 during development of the proposed rule in Denver, Colo.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Dickinson, N.D., and Washington, D.C.

After receiving multiple communications from the public requesting an extension of the comment period or opposing such an extension, the BLM is extending the comment period from the original April 8 deadline. The public will now have an additional 14 days, until to April 22, 2016, to review and comment on the draft rule.

The proposed rule would require oil and gas producers to adopt currently available technologies, processes and equipment that would limit the rate of flaring at oil wells on public and tribal lands, and would require operators to periodically inspect their operations for leaks, and to replace outdated equipment that vents large quantities of gas into the air. Operators would also be required to limit venting from storage tanks and use best practices to limit gas losses when removing liquids from wells.

The new measures would also clarify when operators owe royalties on flared gas, and ensure that BLM's regulations provide congressionally authorized flexibility to set royalty rates at or above 12.5 percent of the value of production.

U.S. oil production is at its highest level in nearly 30 years and the nation is now the largest natural gas producer in the world, providing an abundant source of clean-burning fuel to power and heat American homes and businesses. At the same time, venting and leaks during oil and gas operations are major sources of harmful methane emissions, a powerful greenhouse gas about 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. U.S. methane emissions are projected to increase substantially without additional steps to lower them. The proposal is consistent with the [Obama Administration's goal to cut methane emissions](#) from the oil and gas sector by 40-45 percent

from 2012 levels by 2025.

Currently, vast amounts of natural gas from public and Indian lands are lost through venting, flaring and leaks from oil and gas operations. Between 2009 and 2014, enough natural gas was lost through venting, flaring and leaks to power more than five million homes for a year. States, Tribes and federal taxpayers also lose royalty revenues when natural gas is wasted – as much as \$23 million annually in royalty revenue for the Federal Government and the States that share it, according to a 2010 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report.

More information about the proposed rule, including its text, a fact sheet, the Regulatory Impact Analysis, the Environmental Analysis, and other information can be found on the web page

[Public Events on Oil and Gas](http://www.blm.gov) at: www.blm.gov.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.