

# Obama Administration Issues Strategy to Reduce Methane Emissions

Article By:

Ashley L. Thompson

Jane E. Montgomery

---

As part of its Climate Action Plan, the Obama Administration issued a “Strategy to Reduce Methane Emissions” (the Methane Strategy) at the end of March 2014. According to the Methane Strategy, methane emissions currently account for almost nine percent of all domestic greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in the United States. While methane emissions have decreased since 1990, they are expected to increase over the next 15 years if no additional action is taken. The Obama Administration’s Methane Strategy focuses on reducing methane emissions from landfills, coal mines, and the agriculture and oil and gas sectors. Building on and updating existing programs is key to the strategy. The key proposals for reducing methane emissions from these areas are outlined by sector below:

- **Landfills:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) will propose updated standards to reduce methane from new landfills this summer, and will also seek public comment on updating standards for existing landfills. USEPA will also (1) continue to promote voluntary methane recovery projects at landfills through the Landfill Methane Outreach Program; and (2) continue to reduce, recover, or recycle food waste as a method of reducing the size of landfills, and consequently, reducing the emissions from landfills through the U.S. Food Waste Challenge.
- **Coal Mines:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will issue an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking shortly that will seek public comment on developing a program for capturing, selling, and/or disposing of waste mine methane produced on Federal government lands through coal and other solid mineral leases. USEPA will continue to promote voluntary recovery and beneficial use of methane in the coal mining industry.
- **Agriculture:** The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy (DOE), in cooperation with the dairy industry, will release a “Biogas Roadmap” this June. The Biogas Roadmap will provide voluntary strategies for implementing technologies for reducing GHGs from this sector of the economy. Primary focus will be on encouraging the use of anaerobic digestion and biogas utilization systems.

- **Oil and Gas:** This spring, USEPA will begin investigating how to reduce GHG emissions from this industry through white papers from independent experts. These white papers will focus on reducing both Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and methane. After the white papers are peer reviewed this summer, USEPA intends to decide the next steps for reducing emissions from this sector next fall. This process will include determining whether the current regulatory authorities apply to these sources. If USEPA decides to take regulatory action, any proposed regulations will be issued by the end of 2016. USEPA will also continue to promote its Natural Gas STAR Program which outlines technologies and practices for reducing and/or avoiding methane emissions. BLM will also release a proposed rule (informally called the “Onshore Order 9”) for regulating venting and flaring from oil and gas production on Federal government lands. Finally, DOE will issue the first Quadrennial Energy Review (QER) in January 2015 to recommend actions for improving energy transmission, storage, and distribution, including opportunities to abate methane emissions.

The full strategy is available on the [White House website](#).

© 2025 ArentFox Schiff LLP

---

National Law Review, Volume IV, Number 98

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/obama-administration-issues-strategy-to-reduce-methane-emissions>