**EPA NSPS Toolkit**

[**Sample Statement**](#kix.qayhgtg1nli) **|** [**Talking Points**](#kix.tg8hnawiz39w) **|** [**Sample Comment**](#etomeokaepe9) **|** [**Social Guidance**](#kix.rasvpf8b305m) **|** [**Graphics**](#kix.ozlsr3utwvte)**|** [**LTE Template**](#kix.2ggd246wd90k)

**Overview**

Today, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler proposed to weaken the EPA’s New Source Performance Standards, which have been in force for almost a year, for the oil and gas industry. These commonsense safeguards were designed to limit the release of methane pollution, a potent greenhouse gas, from oil and gas infrastructure, and also to help protect communities from other harmful pollutants released alongside methane, such as benzene and volatile organic compounds.

Acting Administrator Wheeler’s attempt to weaken these protections and create loopholes for polluters is a blatant giveaway to oil and gas interests at the expense of communities’ health and well-being.

This is the beginning of a two part-step scheme to dramatically weaken efforts to reduce methane and other oil and gas pollution, beginning with the Trump Administration creating these massive loopholes for corporate polluters before they go on to destroy any efforts to clean up existing sources of pollution. The American people shouldn’t be fooled by an effort that sounds technical - this rollback will mean a dirtier and less efficient energy system and American communities will pay the price.

Please use the messaging guidance and template materials below to push back against Wheeler’s rollback of the EPA’s oil and gas standards, which represents the administrations’ latest attempt to sell out American families’ health to corporate polluters.

 **Sample Statement**

“EPA Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler’s efforts to weaken these commonsense, cost-effective oil and gas pollution standards will increase pollution, hurt the communities where this development exists, and ignores the EPA’s responsibility to protect American families. The Trump Administration’s actions fit its pattern of putting corporate polluter profits ahead of people, and represents the first step in their plan to eliminate a methane rule that even industry says it can live with.

“Regularly looking for and repairing leaks is not only the right thing to do, it is the only way to protect the air we breathe. Instead of keeping these critical pollution safeguards - which have been working for almost a year - in place, Acting Administrator Wheeler’s reckless decision is now putting polluters ahead of the health and well-being of [STATIENS] and people across the country,” **said XYZ**.

“Instead of creating loopholes for the worst actors in the oil and gas industry and giving them the green light to continue polluting the air our kids breathe, Acting Administrator Wheeler should **do his job** and protect our communities and our kids by keeping in place and fully implementing standards that would reduce harmful pollution from new and modified oil and gas sites.”

**Talking Points**

*\*For use in reporter conversations, LTEs, etc.*

**Topline Messaging**

* Wheeler is attacking our children’s health by proposing to weaken EPA’s oil and gas methane rules and create loopholes to benefit his polluter friends.
* It is critical the EPA keep the New Source Performance Standards, which have been in place and working for almost a year, strong and in effect to protect communities living near oil and gas development from harmful pollution, instead of selling our children and families out to the worst actors in the oil and gas industry.
* That includes not weakening provisions on leak detection and repair, or creating loopholes for specific types of wells for special interests. This policy change will exempt thousands of sites from any pollution reduction requirements, and mean significantly more pollution in the air our families breathe.
* A recent study published in the journal [*Science*](http://science.sciencemag.org/cgi/doi/10.1126/science.aar7204) found that the U.S. oil and gas industry emits 13 million metric tons of methane from its operations each year—nearly 60 percent more than currently estimated by the EPA. Without the EPA’s New Source Performance Standards,the climate impact of using natural gas may be no better than coal.

**Public Health Impacts**

* Weakening these standards means more pollution in our air and is a blatant attack on the people who live near these facilities and depend on these protections to keep the air they breathe clean.
* The EPA standards in place right now will reduce emissions from over 36,000 wells all around the country, including cutting 21,635 tons of methane, around 6,000 tons of smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and 450,000 pounds of toxic air pollutants, each year.
* EPA must continue to require operators to use proven, cost-effective technologies and practices to prevent harmful air pollution from oil and gas sites instead of putting polluter profits ahead of the health of our families and future generations.

**Climate**

* Methane poses a grave a danger to our planet. It has over 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide, making it a major driver of climate change.
* Right now, oil and gas industrial facilities emit at least 8.1 million metric tons of methane pollution a year. That has the same climate impact as operating over 150 coal-fired power plants for a year, or driving more than 145 million cars for a year.
* Rolling back the EPA’s methane rules means more potent climate pollution, undercutting the climate benefit of natural gas over coal.

**Commonsense, Cost-Effective, & Legally Sound**

* Leaks can occur at anytime and can happen anywhere. In order to protect communities living near new and modified oil and gas sites, we need to keep the EPA standards strong and in effect.
* These standards use commonsense and cost-effective solutions to reduce methane emissions; EPA’s own analysis found that these standards would achieve significant reductions of methane and other harmful air pollution at low cost.
* The experience of energy-producing states such as Colorado and Wyoming demonstrates that these common-sense, effective, and feasible emission controls don’t harm industry: regulations requiring the same measures as required by the 2016 EPA standards have been in place in both states for some time, and the industry is thriving.

**Industry Is Committing to Reduce Emissions**

* There is no reason to weaken the rule, which is cost effective and helps create a more efficient energy system-- especially as industry continues to move forward on efforts to reduce emissions.
	+ In May, ExxonMobil committed to reduce methane emissions by 15 percent and flaring by 25 percent by 2020. Earlier in the year ExxonMobil US subsidiary XTO Energy also announced an enhanced leak detection and repair program.

**Sample Comment**

Sample Comment for LDAR Rule

Acting Administrator Wheeler, do not weaken leak detection and repair or provide other loopholes for the oil and gas industry to continue emitting harmful pollutants during development. Rather than weaken these critical protections, we need the EPA to **strengthen** requirements for oil and gas companies to regularly check for and repair leaking equipment. Americans depend on the EPA to protect us from the harmful pollution that makes it harder to breathe – and the corporate polluters who profit from it. We need the EPA to fulfill its mission to “protect human health and the environment” by not letting corporate polluters play fast and loose with our children's health.

It is EPA’s obligation to protect all Americans from harmful methane pollution. Any attempt to slow or dismantle standards that require oil and gas companies to employ commonsense and cost-effective solutions to reduce methane emissions is a direct assault on our health and environment-- and the Environmental Protection Agency should not be complicit.

Sample Comment for Both Rules

I oppose this move to gut the EPA’s methane pollution standards. Rather than weakening these critical protections, we need the EPA to **strengthen** methane pollution safeguards. Americans depend on the EPA to protect us from the harmful pollution that makes it harder to breathe – and the corporate polluters who profit from it. We need the EPA to fulfill its mission to “protect human health and the environment” by not letting corporate polluters play fast and loose with our children's health.

It is the EPA’s obligation to protect all Americans from harmful methane pollution. Any attempt to weaken or dismantle standards that cut pollution from the oil and a gas industry is a direct assault on our health and environment – and the Environmental Protection Agency should not be complicit.

**Social Guidance**

**Handles**

@EPAAWheeler

@EPA

#cutmethane

**Twitter**

BREAKING: @EPAAWheeler is putting oil & gas lobbyists ahead of public health by working to weak the EPA’s critical oil and gas pollution standards #cutmethane

Instead of fighting for clean air, @EPAAWheeler put polluters first by trying to weak rules that reduce air pollution and protect public health

By weakening the EPA’s pollution standards, @EPAAWheeler put oil and gas lobbyists ahead of the health and well-being of hard-working families #cutmethane

@EPA’s commonsense pollution standards safeguard our childrens’ health and wellbeing, families living near oil and gas development need these critical protections to reduce exposure to harmful emissions #cutmethane

Americans have made it clear to @EPAAWheeler that they overwhelmingly support EPA’s commonsense oil and gas standards. We can’t turn back the clock on these critical protections.

Our children deserve better than their health and safety being sold out to oil and gas lobbyists by @EPAAWheeler #PeopleNotPolluters

Gutting EPA’s methane rules makes the oil and gas industry less competitive in a clean energy economy and is a lose-lose for American communities and businesses

We’re seeing wildfires, heatwaves and floods, yet @EPAAWheeler is giving the oil and gas industry a green-light to emit more potent climate pollution

**Facebook**

BREAKING: Acting Administrator Wheeler [TAG] just put polluters and lobbyists ahead of public health and hard-working families by proposing to weaken critical clean air protections. Our leaders should be protecting the air our children breathe instead of selling their health our to the highest bidder #cutmethane

Instead of doing his job and protecting public health, Acting Administrator Wheeler’s [TAG] is attempting to weaken the EPA’s oil and gas pollution standards-- demonstrating that he has no problem recklessly polluting our air and wasting our natural resources if it means helping out his oil and gas lobbyist friends. It’s time to put hard working families ahead of corporate polluters.

**Graphics**

**Download** [**additional graphics here**](http://www.methanefacts.org/social-media-graphics/)**.**

**LTE** **Template**

General

EPA Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler and the Trump administration announced their plans to weaken common-sense health protections, known as New Source Performance Standards (NSPS), which limit methane and other toxic pollutants from being released into the air. These current standards need to be kept strong and in place to protect [State] communities from the immediate air quality impacts of rapidly expanding oil and gas infrastructure and methane pollution fueling climate change.

These standards require companies to adopt cost effective and common-sense solutions to detect and repair leaks, which industry leaders like ExxonMobil subsidiary XTO Energy already exceeds, as well as other best practices to reduce pollution. EPA’s own analysis found that its 2016 final oil and gas methane standards would achieve significant reductions of methane and other harmful air pollution at low cost.

At a time when the industry is reporting high profits, weakening these rules, including creating new loopholes, makes no sense and will mean more air pollution. This is especially true because these rules have already been on the books for almost a year.

EPA has the responsibility to protect Americans from the clear and present health threats from oil and gas pollution, and weakening these rules is an attack on communities located near these facilities who depend on these protections. However, if Wheeler and Trump succeed, the health of my family and others across [State] will suffer. That is why it is so important for all [State Demonym] to make our voices heard on or before [comment deadline] and tell Wheeler and Trump that we oppose their attacks on our health protections before it’s too late. You can send your comment in here: LINK. Our well being depends on it.

Climate focus

Just as the country is facing record temperatures, wildfires, and hurricanes, Acting Administrator Wheeler is recklessly beginning an effort that will make America’s oil and gas industry emit more climate pollution, waste more energy, and compete less effectively.

Wheeler recently proposed to weaken key parts of the EPA’s rules to reduce oil and gas methane pollution and is expected to move forward in the coming weeks with another rule to get rid of direct regulation of methane from this sector. This gigantic loophole would let numerous oil and gas continue to pollute our atmosphere with this potent greenhouse gas without restriction or supervision - even after a recent study found the U.S. oil and gas industry emits 60% more methane than we previously thought.

Natural gas is now our largest source of energy for electricity, but other clean energy sources are getting cheaper by the day. If the natural gas industry want to actually be a cleaner source of energy compared to alternatives like coal, it needs to clean up its act, and that means we need strong standards to reduce methane pollution.

Wheeler’s proposal is bad for Americans who are bearing the increasing costs of climate change impacts, and also bad for an industry trying to compete in a cleaner energy economy. It’s a lose-lose proposal and he should listen to the majority of Americans that are demanding EPA keep methane rules strong and intact.