

# FALSE PROMISES: OIL & GAS METHANE EMISSIONS ARE STILL RISING

## VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES HAVE PROLIFERATED...

Over the past decade, methane emissions associated with oil and gas production have raised alarms worldwide.<sup>1</sup> In response, voluntary initiatives claiming to address the methane issue have proliferated. The International Energy Agency (IEA) states that countries and companies pledging to reduce methane emissions “cover 80% of global oil and gas production (...) however, only around 5% of global oil and gas output demonstrably meets a near-zero methane emissions standard.”<sup>2</sup>

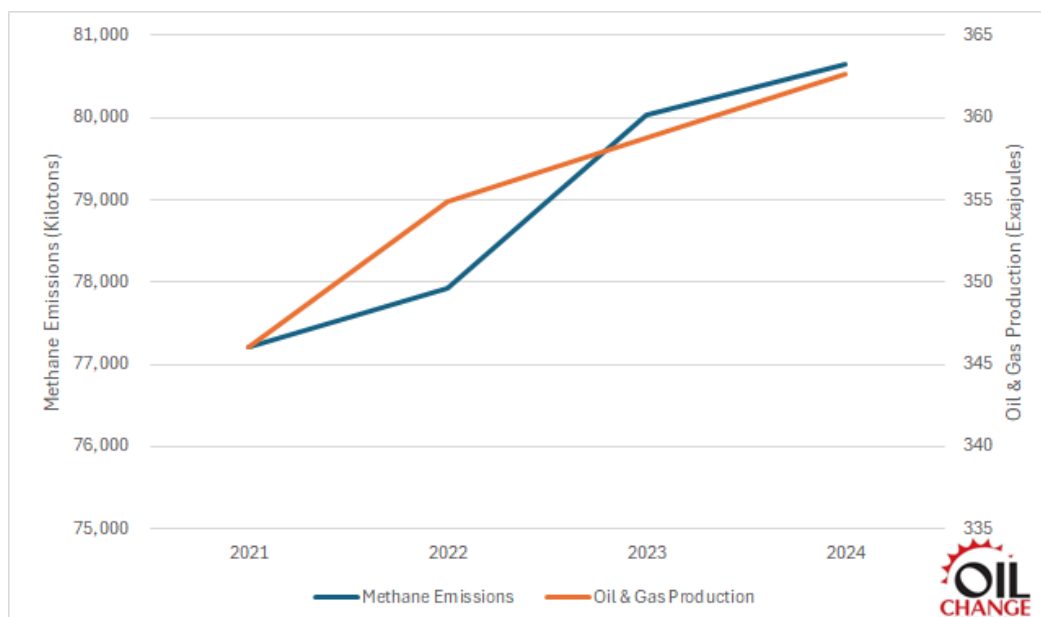
In the United States, where oil and gas production and exports have soared along with emissions and chronic community harm, a spin-off industry has emerged claiming to certify as much as 45% of U.S. gas production as “low emissions.”<sup>3</sup> “Certified gas” has come under increasing scrutiny and appears to be yet another attempt by the oil and gas industry to greenwash its products.<sup>4</sup>

## ...AS HAVE EMISSIONS

Data from the IEA’s Global Methane Tracker suggests that these industry initiatives are failing.<sup>5</sup> Since the Global Methane Pledge<sup>6</sup> was signed in 2021, emissions have increased 4.5%, essentially rising in lockstep with production.

The lack of progress underscores the need for a significant shift in how methane emissions in the oil and gas sector are addressed. The oil and gas industry cannot be trusted to reduce its emissions voluntarily. Robust government regulation is necessary, accompanied by strict enforcement and penalties for noncompliance.

**Figure: Global Oil & Gas Sector Methane Emissions Rise with Oil & Gas Production**



**Voluntary initiatives to reduce methane** <sup>7</sup>  
**share one or more of the following issues:**

- Lack of penalties for failure to participate or meet stated goals.
- Lack of requirements to report emissions for all assets, enabling cherry-picking.
- Overreliance on a limited set of monitoring technologies, none of which are adequate alone.
- No requirement for empirical, observation-based measurements of emissions.
- Lack of transparency.
  - Emissions data is collected and reported by the companies themselves.
  - Does not require independent data verification.
  - Granular (site-level) emissions data is not publicly available.
- Focus on methane intensity metrics, rather than absolute methane emissions reduction.
- No requirement to phase out fossil fuels and transition to clean energy, which leads to a business-as-usual approach to expansion and increased emissions.

**The European Union has the world's only regulatory regime for methane emissions, but it is under attack by industry lobbyists and the United States.**

The most significant regulatory regime in existence today is the European Union Methane Regulation (EUMR), which introduces new requirements for the fossil fuel sector to measure, report, and verify methane emissions, including from imports.<sup>8</sup> U.S. industry lobbyists have been pushing for loopholes as the U.S. oil and gas sector is incapable of meeting the requirements for a variety of reasons:<sup>9</sup>

- The U.S. oil and gas network involves hundreds of different companies, whose products co-mingle at various points along the supply chain.
- This structure and complexity make granular traceability impossible.
- U.S. law provides significant protection for data that a company deems proprietary.
- The Trump administration has dismantled emissions data collection, regulatory regimes, and enforcement.

**U.S. GAS CERTIFIERS DO NOT HAVE THE SOLUTION TO METHANE EMISSIONS**

U.S. gas “certifiers” see an opportunity to sell “certification” as a silver bullet, enabling both U.S. LNG exporters and EU importers to comply with the EUMR. However, certification suffers from the same shortcomings as other industry initiatives, including a lack of empirical evidence of its efficacy in reducing emissions and transparency.<sup>10</sup> European regulators must not fall into the “certified gas” trap. Instead, they should implement and maintain the integrity of the EUMR, as well as accelerate the phaseout of gas and other fossil fuels.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Voluntary initiatives to reduce methane emissions in the oil and gas sector are failing. The U.S., the world's largest gas producer and exporter, effectively lacks a reliable regulatory regime to control emissions. European regulators must enforce the EUMR on all fossil fuels, including imports. **All fossil fuel-producing countries should enact emissions regulations that include:**

- Clear definitions and robust enforcement.
- Public transparency of monitoring data.
- A suite of monitoring technologies rather than overreliance on one or two.
- A clear plan for fair, fast, and funded fossil fuel phaseout.

Please email  
[info@oilchange.org](mailto:info@oilchange.org) with  
any questions.

For the full list of sources,  
please refer to:  
[www.oilchange.org/  
publications/false-  
promises-methane](http://www.oilchange.org/publications/false-promises-methane)

## Endnotes:

1. Chelsea Harvey, “Scientists sound alarm over growing global methane emissions.” E&E News. Sept. 10, 2024. [LINK](#)
2. IEA, “Methane data and transparency continue to improve, but emissions remain far too high.” May 07, 2025. [LINK](#)
3. Tope Alake, “Low-Methane Natural Gas Captures Almost Half the US Market.” Bloomberg, April 16, 2024. [LINK](#)
4. See: [www.certifiedgaslighting.com](http://www.certifiedgaslighting.com)
5. See: [www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2025](http://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2025)
6. See: [www.globalmethanepledge.ccacoalition.org/](http://www.globalmethanepledge.ccacoalition.org/)
7. For more detailed recommendations see: “Certified Gaslighting: How gas certification has gained a policy foothold even as it fails to prove it can accurately detect emissions.” Oil Change International and Earthworks. June 2024. [LINK](#)
8. See: [LINK](#)
9. Sharon Kelly, “As Trump’s Trade Deadline Looms, U.S. Gas Exporters Are Sweating Over Meeting Europe’s Pollution Standards.” DeSmog. July 23, 2025. [LINK](#)
10. “Certified Gaslighting: How gas certification has gained a policy foothold even as it fails to prove it can accurately detect emissions.” Oil Change International and Earthworks. June 2024. [LINK](#)

**Oil Change International** is a research, communications, and advocacy organization focused on exposing the true costs of fossil fuels and facilitating the coming transition towards clean energy.

**Earthworks** protects communities and the environment from the adverse impacts of mineral and energy development while promoting sustainable solutions.