



The Strength of Hunter and Angler Voices in the Methane Debate

Let's hold industry to the same standards we hold ourselves

I've been an outdoorsman my whole life. From as soon as I could walk, I was outside playing in the woods, exploring streams and rivers, and finding myself fascinated with all the wonderful wildlife that I encountered. As I grew older and began to fish and hunt, I learned that to truly appreciate and value wildlife is to conserve it. When I harvest a deer or elk, I do so with the intention of utilizing that animal in providing healthy meat for my family. When I bring home a turkey from the woods around my Flagstaff home, I know that I won't simply toss it away because I might not be in the mood to pluck it. The same values apply when I'm on the water. I do not keep every fish I am lucky enough to catch and am very careful that most are returned to the water in a robust and healthy condition. As a hunter and an angler, it is my responsibility to practice conservation and good judgment anytime I'm in the woods or on the water. These are the same values that I'm raising my children with and I hope that these values will guide them through the rest of their lives.

As a western public land hunter, I have often seen the flaring of wellheads all along the horizon in oil-producing states. This routine burning of natural gas is a source of frustration for me because it is so antithetical to the hunting mentality of not wasting a precious resource. Oil and gas companies routinely flare gas to protect equipment or to discard gas when they aren't able to transport it. The energy industry views this gas as a waste product, but it is in fact a valuable resource that is being carelessly thrown away.

As a hunter, I am held to strict standards of conservation and waste reduction when it comes to the pursuit of game on public lands. So why are we allowing oil and gas companies to waste resources on those same lands?

Wasting natural gas isn't just unethical, it is dangerous. Methane leakage and flaring is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions – methane is 85 times more powerful than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period.

Thankfully, the current administration is taking steps to address this issue and stop these harmful practices. The Bureau of Land Management is proposing to update its rules on methane waste and while it is a good start, it needs to be stronger. The agency is proposing to increase the royalties charged for flared gas, but there is no evidence that this will actually reduce flaring. The companies are focused on profits for shareholders and it is often cheaper for them to pay the royalties than to invest in proper equipment and infrastructure to reduce waste.

The Environmental Protection Agency is also proposing stricter protections to limit methane pollution from existing and new facilities. This would include monitoring and repairing of methane leaks and a ban on flaring unless there is no feasible alternative.

We can no longer afford to waste valuable natural resources and contribute to the degradation of our environment. As hunters and anglers, we understand the importance of conservation and the responsible

management of our natural resources. It is time for the oil and gas industry to take a cue from our responsible practices and for the current administration to use all of its tools to enact strong methane solutions that will benefit our country for generations to come.

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