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### EPA PROPOSES RULES TO CURB METHANE FROM OIL, GAS WELLS

The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed rules aimed at cutting methane emissions from oil and gas production by requiring energy companies to install new technologies at future wells.

Some industry officials criticized the proposed rules as duplicative, but several companies that produce and transport natural gas said they already were taking such steps voluntarily.

The proposals were part of a broader Obama administration goal to cut methane emissions from oil and gas production by as much as 45% from 2012 levels over the next decade.

The required reductions of methane - a potent greenhouse gas - from new oil and natural-gas wells supplement voluntary initiatives the EPA outlined a few weeks ago to address emissions at existing wells.

Many companies that produce or transport natural gas cautiously supported the EPA regulations as well as the measures designed to encourage companies to cut emissions from existing wells. Since natural gas is made up primarily of methane, cutting methane emissions would leave natural-gas companies with more gas to sell.

"We think that the combination of approaches really allows a company a lot of flexibility to assess their own emissions profile and determine for that particular company what is the most cost-effective way to reduce methane emissions," said Mark Boling, an executive vice president at Houston-based **Southwestern Energy Co.**, one of the nation's largest natural-gas producers.

(By Amy Harder and Erin Ailworth, Wall Street Journal, 8-19-15)



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