FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Hosts White House Methane Summit to Tackle Dangerous Climate Pollution, while Creating Good-Paying Jobs and Protecting Community Health

July 26, 2023

New Cabinet-level White House Methane Task Force will strengthen interagency and multi-stakeholder action to dramatically reduce methane emissions.

Today, the Biden-Harris Administration will convene the first ever **White House Methane Summit** around the urgent need to dramatically reduce methane emissions, especially from leaks in the oil and gas sector, as a way to protect public health, create good-paying jobs, save consumers money, and advance President Biden's ambitious climate agenda. The President's Investing in America agenda is accelerating adoption of technologies and tools to address methane emissions and helping the U.S. unlock a win-win opportunity for communities and the economy. **Just this week, new analysis from the Blue Green Alliance found that full adoption of the Biden-Harris Administration's proposed leak-reducing actions will create 10,000 net direct and indirect jobs each year, in sectors like manufacturing, construction, and operations and maintenance.**

Methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide and can lead to serious public health impacts, from asthma to cancer to premature deaths. Methane is responsible for one-third of the warming impacts millions of Americans are experiencing right now – from record heat

waves to smoke-filled skies to flash flooding and more intense hurricanes. Methane leaks amount to billions of dollars' of wasted natural gas every year. In the United States, 30 percent of methane emissions come from the oil and gas sector, which increasingly has tools to slash leaks.

Today's White House Methane Summit will focus on these significant opportunities:

- **Establishing a New Cabinet-level Methane Task Force:** The Biden-Harris Administration is announcing a new Cabinet-level Methane Task Force, which will advance a whole-of-government approach to proactive methane leak detection and data transparency, and support state and local efforts to mitigate and enforce methane emissions regulations. The Task Force will accelerate execution of the U.S. Methane Emissions Reduction Action Plan, building on over 80 Administration actions taken to date under the Plan.
- **Detecting Emissions Using Innovative Technology:** Identifying methane emissions at their source is a critical first step to tackling climate and health impacts and setting and enforcing robust rules of the road, which is why the Administration is focused on deploying innovative methane monitoring technologies.
- **Taking Common-Sense Actions to Mitigate Methane Emissions:** President Biden's historic investments in methane emissions mitigation – from plugging orphaned wells to inspecting thousands of miles of pipelines – can prevent major emission leaks before they ever occur, all while creating good paying jobs.
- **Responding to Emissions Events:** In 2022, satellites detected more than 500 super-emitting events at oil and gas operations around the world. By building a diverse coalition, including States and Tribal governments, to rapidly respond to emissions events and hold polluters accountable, stakeholders can better harness new tools and technologies to be more ready to act quickly, protect public health, and prevent future events.

- **Leading International Efforts on Methane Management:** The Biden-Harris Administration is leveraging domestic action to raise global ambition and coordinating international efforts to mitigate methane emissions.

Detecting Emissions Using Innovative Technologies & Tools

Identifying methane emissions at their source is a critical first step to tackling climate and health impacts and setting and enforcing robust rules of the road, which is why the Administration is prioritizing the full use of the latest and most innovative technologies and tools available today.

- **Deploying cutting edge technology to make the invisible seen:** Federal agencies are deploying next generation tools to help identify and quantify methane emissions. Through the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) EMIT instrument on the International Space Station, hundreds of methane super-emitter events associated with oil and gas infrastructure were identified over the last year. These findings were released publicly via the EMIT open data portal, which is updated daily. Additionally, to ensure detection in urban areas, the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Urban GHG Measurement Testbed System measures and makes public methane and carbon dioxide concentrations in the three urban areas of Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and Washington/Baltimore. This summer, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Atmospheric Emissions and Reactions Observed from Megacities to Marine Area and Coastal Urban Plume Dynamics Study programs are measuring methane leaks in urban natural gas infrastructure in New York City. Data will be made public within the next year.
- **Developing data products to improve public understanding of methane emissions**: NASA, EPA, NIST and NOAA are developing the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Center – an open-access portal that will provide

policymakers and the public with a comprehensive collection of GHG datasets and visualizations. Additionally in January 2023, NOAA and NIST launched the Greenhouse Gas and Air Pollutants Emissions System (GRAAPES) with the long-term goal to measure and model greenhouse gas emissions, including methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. GRAAPES will launch a mobile laboratory to conduct urban and other emissions measurements relevant to oil and gas, conduct flights over Utah's oil and gas producing Uintah Basin and Colorado's Denver-Julesburg Basin, collect data taken by NOAA's satellite instruments for methane source attribution over oil and gas fields, and acquire additional remotely-sensed data from leading methane plume detection technologies from Gulf of Mexico oil and gas platforms.

Taking Common-Sense Actions to Mitigate Methane Emissions

President Biden's historic investments in methane emissions mitigation – from plugging orphaned wells to inspecting thousands of miles of pipelines – can prevent major emission leaks before they ever occur, all while creating good paying jobs.

- **Plugging orphaned wells on Federal, state, and private lands to protect public health and create good jobs:** Many of the United States' thousands of orphaned oil and gas wells are located in rural communities, environmental justice communities, and communities of color that have suffered from years of divestment. President Biden's Investing in America agenda through The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has invested a historic $4.7 billion for well-plugging to not only reduce methane emissions and stop dangerous pollution, but also create good-paying, union jobs and spur economic revitalization. To date, the Department of Interior has made $1.3 billion of this funding available to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells on Federal, Tribal, state, and private lands, and has awarded nearly $660 million in grants under

the program. This has enabled roughly 3,000 orphaned wells to be plugged, with thousands more expected through already-announced funding. The funding obligated in FY 2022 alone is expected to create and save 7,250 direct and indirect jobs nationwide. The 26 states eligible for this funding collectively represent nearly every state with documented orphan wells in the country. To qualify for formula funding, states are required to measure methane emissions from orphan wells.

- **Improving leak detection and repair to prevent emissions events before they start:** Last year PHMSA inspected all federally regulated pipelines, liquefied natural gas, and underground natural gas storage facility operators—the first time every operator has been inspected in a calendar year—to ensure compliance with statutorily mandated methane emissions reduction requirements. In April 2023, PHMSA awarded 37 entities nearly $196 million of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant funds to repair, replace, or rehabilitate nearly 270 miles of leak-prone natural gas pipe, reducing methane emissions by an estimated 212 metric tons, annually, and significantly reducing safety risks. These projects are projected to create hundreds of jobs in rural and urban communities.
- **Updating decades-old federal leak detection and repair standards:** Creating strong compliance standards is a win-win for the public and for the oil and gas sector. In May 2023, PHMSA proposed a rule that directly addresses methane leaks and intentional venting on more than 2.7 million miles of gas transmission, distribution, and gathering pipelines; 400+ underground natural gas storage facilities; and 165 liquefied natural gas facilities. The proposal, if finalized, will generate $2 billion in public benefits and update decades-old federal leak detection and repair standards that rely solely on human and animal senses in favor of new requirements that rely on commercially available technologies to find and fix methane leaks. Additionally, PHMSA is in the process of enhancing safety requirements for gas distribution pipelines, through a rulemaking that will implement the Leonel Rondon Pipeline

Safety Act that Congress enacted as part of the bipartisan Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2020. The proposed rule is currently under interagency review and targeted for release in August.

- **Funding emissions management and technical assistance:** Earlier this week, EPA and DOE released a notice of intent to make up to $350 million available for states to help industry voluntarily identify and permanently reduce methane emissions from low-producing conventional wells. EPA and DOE will also partner to offer technical assistance to help companies monitor and reduce methane emissions from leaks and daily operations, thereby helping reduce inefficiencies of U.S. oil and gas operations, create new jobs in energy communities, and realize near-term emission reductions. These funding opportunities are made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act which has provided $1.55 billion for the Methane Emissions Reduction Program.
- **Conducting research and developing future mitigation solutions:** DOE's Methane Mitigation Technologies Program supports applied research related to methane emissions detection, quantification, and remediation in the oil and gas sector, including $47 million in recent awards to 22 research projects. Funds will be used to develop technologies such as advanced materials, advanced sensors, inspection and repair technologies, and improved mechanical components. The Program is currently working with academia and industry partners on developing cost-effective, energy efficient technology solutions to eliminate flaring from oil and natural gas production operations.

Responding to Emissions Events

In 2022, satellites detected more than 500 super-emitting events at oil and gas operations around the world. By building a diverse coalition, including States and Tribal governments, to rapidly respond to emissions events and hold polluters accountable, stakeholders can

better harness new tools and technologies to be more ready to act quickly, protect public health, and prevent future events.

- **Updating facility emissions reporting requirements, including for "super-emitter" events:** EPA issued an Inflation Reduction Act-directed notice of proposed rulemaking in July that would expand its GHG Reporting Program, requiring oil and natural gas facilities to report large emission events including "super-emitter" events and providing a new pathway for using advanced monitoring technologies for emissions quantification of these events.
- **Utilizing advanced monitoring technologies to detect "super-emitter" events:** EPA is developing a final rule for release by end of year to limit methane emissions from new and existing oil and natural gas facilities. This will build on the November 2021 proposed rule and its 2022 supplement, which proposed to incentivize early implementation of innovative methane reduction technologies for the oil and gas sector. The rule, if finalized as proposed, would require routine monitoring of all oil and gas sites, strengthen limitations on flaring, and establish a Super Emitter Response Program, enabling approved entities to report "super emitter" events for follow-up investigation and remediation.
- **Strengthening enforcement through interagency collaboration:** Last week, the Department of Justice held its first meeting of the Methane Enforcement Interagency Working Group (IWG) which – coordinating as appropriate with the White House Methane Task Force – seeks to integrate new datasets and the latest technologies into enforcement activities related to the venting, flaring, leaking, and catastrophic releases of methane. Member agencies will identify complementary methane management authorities, share information and training of inspectors, and seek to coordinate responses to large emissions events. The IWG's initial area of focus will be on the oil and gas sector.

Leading International Efforts on Methane Management

At the U.S.-led Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate in September 2021, the President and the European Union announced the Global Methane Pledge: a global partnership to collectively cut emissions of methane by 30% compared with 2020 levels by 2030. President Biden has helped rally 150 countries to join the initiative, which now covers nearly half of all methane emissions and 70% of global GDP. If participants meet their goals, the pledge could eliminate over 0.2 degrees Celsius of warming by 2050.

- **Accelerating progress to deliver on the Global Methane Pledge**: Complementing bold action at home, the United States is collaborating with global partners to deliver on the Global Methane Pledge with action in the energy, food and agriculture and waste sectors, as well as a $200 million dollar Methane Finance Sprint, major progress on national methane policies, and a Methane Alert and Response System to leverage data for methane action.
- **Verifying emissions throughout the global supply chain:** DOE leads an international working group to advance a framework for the measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification (MMRV) of greenhouse gas emissions from the natural gas supply chain. The MMRV framework focuses on establishing minimum criteria, independent verification, and transparency to the multitude of voluntary industry, NGO, and international government initiatives directed at quantifying emissions throughout the natural gas supply chain.

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