

GLOBAL METHANE FORUM
OPENING PLENARY WELCOME
MARCH 29, 2016
12 minutes

- Thank you, Sarah. And, good morning everyone!
- On behalf of my colleagues at the US Environmental Protection Agency and across the United States Federal Government, I am pleased to welcome you to Washington, D.C. and to the Global Methane Forum.
- We are excited that so many of the world's foremost experts have joined us to focus on addressing the opportunities and challenges we face in mitigating global methane. It's great to be have you here and I hope many of you are able to shake off that jet lag—we have a jam-packed agenda to look forward to over these next couple of days!
- We're glad that you can join us in time to enjoy Washington's lovely spring weather, and catch the tail end of the beautiful cherry blossoms. They are an important symbol not only of our nation's capital but also of international friendship; as many of you may know, they were a gift to the United States from Japan a century ago.
- The Global Methane Forum comes at an auspicious time, as the historic climate change negotiations in Paris last December have infused new energy and excitement into the global

community work on this critical challenge. Now it is time to roll our sleeves up and get to work to translate the commitments made in Paris into action.

- Today, more than ever, global effort is focused on the need to reduce short-lived climate pollutants like methane.
- Methane is upwards of 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide in warming the planet and is a key constituent of natural gas. By tackling methane emissions, we can unlock an amazing opportunity to spur global action in the fight against climate change, reap economic benefits, improve efficiencies, and increase worker safety.
- Just a few weeks ago, President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to new actions to reduce methane pollution from the oil and natural gas sector, the world's largest industrial source of methane. It is great to build upon the energy and excitement of that announcement.
- Here in the U.S., we're already working to implement the President's Strategy to Cut Methane Emissions, part of the U.S. Climate Action Plan. With a national goal of cutting emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40 to 45 percent below 2012 levels by 2025, EPA is taking several actions to move us closer towards achieving this goal:

- This past summer, we proposed standards to directly address methane from new and modified sources in the oil and gas sector, and we are planning to finalize these rules soon.
- We've also proposed rules to reduce emissions from new and existing municipal solid waste landfills which we expect to finalize this summer.
- In addition, we are taking a closer look at regulating existing sources of methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. We will begin soon a formal process to require companies operating existing oil and gas sources to provide information to assist in the development of comprehensive regulations to reduce emissions.
- And, as the science advances and new data emerge, EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program continues to work to improve data quality, to more accurately reflect industry practices, and add new monitoring methods. We want to ensure we capture the most accurate data available, which will better position us to address this growing climate threat.
- It's important to note that a number of states are also working to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management is working on

- waste-prevention regulations for oil and gas operations on federal land. EPA is coordinating closely with states and BLM to learn from what they are already doing, and to ensure industry will not face overlapping requirements.
- We look forward to sharing more details about our domestic work to address methane emissions, and to hearing from the many experts gathered here about your efforts.
 - Over the course of the next few days, we will have the chance to hear from a range of fantastic speakers and technical experts from around the globe about why methane mitigation is crucial, and the many opportunities that exist through technologies, policies and financial incentives to address it.
 - This event itself is important in both substance and symbolism. In terms of symbolism, it is the first jointly organized cross-cutting meeting by two fantastic international partnerships, the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC). The collaborative partnership developing between these important groups is something that bodes well as we embrace the challenge of reducing short-lived climate pollutants like methane.
 - I'd like to take just a moment to note a couple impressive recent accomplishments by the Global Methane Initiative.

- Since 2004, GMI has supported more than 600 project development-related activities, including assessments, feasibility studies, site visits and other capacity building, partnership, and information sharing activities around the world.
- GMI recently worked closely with the United Nations Environment Programme to help design and launch CCAC's Oil and Gas Methane Partnership and recruit founding Partner Companies.
- Globally, GMI is supporting approximately 1,000 methane emission reduction projects.
- Back to the Forum - in terms of substance, there are many important events happening this week.
- First, we will formally re-charter the Global Methane Initiative – which has been a successful partnership of 43 countries for the past 12 years. We'll kick off another five years of partnership and highlight our new strategic alliances with CCAC and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
- In addition, we are excited to launch, in conjunction with the Forum, a new U.S. voluntary program aimed at curbing methane emissions—the Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge. The Methane Challenge Program will move us closer towards meeting our national emissions reduction goals,

and will allow companies to make and track ambitious commitments to reduce emissions in a transparent and comprehensive way. We've got an impressive group of companies with us here at the Forum to formally launch the program.

- We also have numerous technical and policy sessions that will cover the unique challenges and opportunities in mitigating methane in three sectors— biogas, coal mines, and oil and gas. These sessions have traditionally been a big hit at prior conferences because they provide a rare opportunity for people working on the group all over the world to share their experiences, learn from one another, and make the job of the next mitigation project just a little easier than the last one. Here is a preview:
- You'll have the chance today and this week to hear from global experts on topics including:
 - The recent Paris negotiations and outcomes, and an assessment for the role methane mitigation will play in implementing the Paris Agreement,
 - Climate finance and the role of multilateral institutions,
 - The role of private sector financing,
 - Working with developing countries to finance implementation of INDCs,

- Multilateral development bank perspectives on climate and methane financing,
- Perspectives from national-level leaders on strategies to reduce methane emissions, and more.
- Finally, later this week, we will have a top-notch science-policy dialogue organized by CCAC.
- During this week in Washington, we hope you will take this opportunity to get to meet and talk with this incredible global community of technical and policy experts.
- As you can see, we have a great agenda lined up for you, including time for networking.
- We appreciate the strong support of all of our partners from GMI and CCAC leading up to this event.
- Together we can make a difference in addressing global methane pollution and ensure a more stable environment for generations to come.
- Thank you!