

# ONLY AROUND 13% OF GLOBAL METHANE EMISSIONS REGULATED: STUDY

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A flare burns natural gas at an oil well in Watford City, N.D. The federal agency that regulates pipelines on Friday, May 5 announced new rules aimed at reducing leaks of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from a network of nearly 3 million miles of natural gas pipelines that crisscross the country. | Photo Credit: AP

Researchers have showed through a review that only around 13% of global methane emissions are regulated, despite methane emissions causing at least 25% of current global warming.

The researchers from Queen Mary University of London, U.K., also found that little is known about the effectiveness of the policies that exist, with potentially unrepresentative methane emission estimations used rather than actual measurements.

This global review of methane policies, published in the journal "One Earth", systematically looked at all major man-made emission sources, agriculture, energy and waste. The researchers focused on 281 policies worldwide, 255 of them currently in force, that aim to monitor and reduce methane emissions examining the geographical coverage, strength and effectiveness of the policies.

90% of identified national policies have been adopted in three regions: North America (39%), Europe (30%) and Asia Pacific (21%).

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Globally, the research showed there has been a gradual increase in methane policies since 1974. But fossil methane policies, e.g., targeting emissions from coal, oil and gas sectors tend to be less stringent than those targeting biogenic methane sources, especially in the waste sector.

One of the main challenges to measuring methane emissions, the researchers said, is accurately identifying and quantifying sources. Developing and using technologies such as satellites to monitor methane emissions can help policymakers with measurement, verification, compliance and detection of super-emitters.

Introducing policies with greater policy coverage, mitigation solutions including for major

sources, and measurable objectives could lead to a significant methane emissions reduction, they said.

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Inaccurate estimations can also mean the issue is taken less seriously by decision-makers by masking its severity, they said, and argued that the lack of regulation and clarity into their impact must urgently be addressed if we were to meet our global climate targets.

Their review suggested a consistent approach worldwide with robust quantification and reporting could unlock new opportunities to drastically reduce global warming levels.

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To meet the [Paris Agreement](#) 1.5°C objective, man-made methane emissions should be reduced by at least 40 to 45% by 2030, compared to the 2020 levels. Methane mitigation is not only a cost-effective strategy to reduce global warming but could also improve the air quality.

Today, methane emissions are increasing faster than at any time since the 1980s, they said.

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