

WHAT'S IN THE AIR?

INVISIBLE IMPACTS OF VENTING AND FLARING FROM OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION

The smell of rotten eggs that passes by your home once in a while? Blistering headaches? Trouble breathing? While oil & gas is essential for our local economies, it may be responsible for some public health problems.

When oil and gas facilities extract natural gas from oil wells, they often either release it into the air ("venting") or burn it off ("flaring") because the excess gas is not as valuable as the oil. Natural gas is made out of **methane**, an invisible, odorless gas. When methane is released through preventable leaks, venting, or flaring, it wastes a scarce resource, harms community health, and leads to faster warming of our climate.



WHAT GETS RELEASED?

VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS (VOCs)

Exposure to VOCs like benzene, toluene, and xylene is linked to cancer, respiratory and neurological effects, headaches, and dizziness.

OZONE

VOCs and nitrous oxides react in sunlight to produce ozone, leading to worsening asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory illnesses – particularly among children and elderly residents.

PARTICULATE MATTER (PM)

Flaring produces black carbon ("soot") and other fine particulates associated with heart attacks, strokes, premature mortality, diabetes, and lung disease.

METHANE

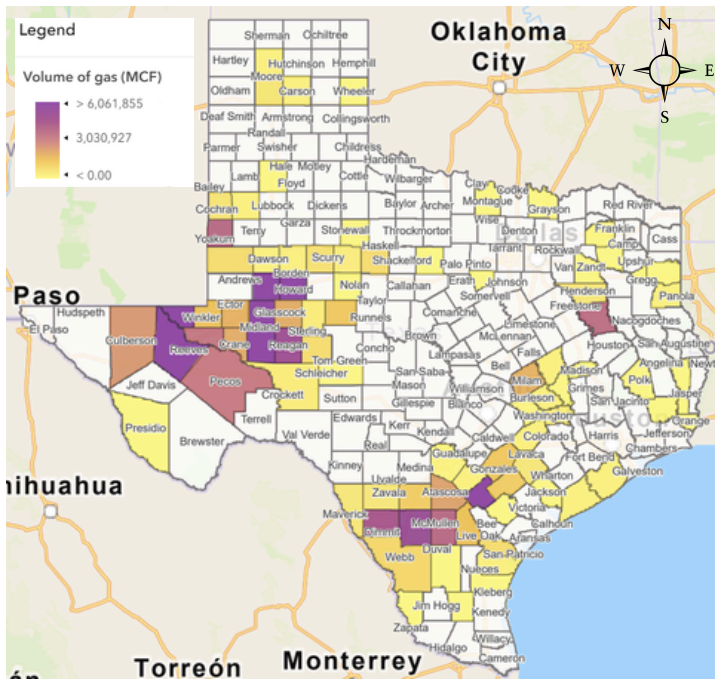
Oil and gas operations are the leading source of methane emissions in the U.S., a greenhouse gas that significantly contributes to climate change.

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HISPANIC COMMUNITIES ARE HURT THE MOST

Hispanic communities are disproportionately **more likely to be located near flaring and leaking oil and gas facilities** in comparison to predominantly non-Hispanic communities. Health risks associated with flaring have been linked to **increased preterm births among Hispanic mothers**. In Texas alone, state regulators have permitted companies to burn **more than a million cubic feet of gas every day** since 2019. Combined, that would be enough natural gas to supply **15 million homes' annual gas needs**. Each year oil and gas operators in Texas waste over **\$480 million** worth of natural gas through flaring, instead of harnessing it for productive uses. Flaring impacts largely rural, low income, and marginalized communities which is an environmental injustice that must be addressed.



Volume of gas vented and flared by county in thousands of cubic feet (MCF), satellite-detected

The volume of gas flared in Texas has tripled since 2009. Oil and gas pollution has led to:

15,000

ANNUAL ASTHMA INCIDENTS RELATED TO VENTING AND FLARING

133

PREMATURE DEATHS RELATED TO VENTING AND FLARING

\$15 BILLION

IN TOTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

WHAT DO WE DO?

Demand better oversight and enforcement to prevent flaring, venting, and leaks from oil and gas facilities. Our state oil and gas agency, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC), has failed to enforce its own rules and rein in excess flaring and venting. The agency has also ignored waste and public health concerns and fought federal laws that would require operators to address leaks.

Learn more about the impacts of flaring in your county via the Texas Flaring Project. texasflaringproject.org



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