

At Climate Week New York yesterday, California announced a significant new initiative for Subnational action on methane. The UC Berkeley Center for Law, Energy, and Environment (CLEE) helped develop the Initiative, so I'm particularly pleased to highlight it.

Methane

As has been discussed previously in Legal Planet, methane is a colorless, odorless, flammable gas. It is the main component of "natural gas" and is produced predominantly by the agriculture, energy (oil & gas and coal), and waste sectors. Methane is responsible for [30 percent](#) of current global warming and is [80 times](#) more powerful than carbon dioxide over a 20 year period. Given its high potency and short atmospheric lifespan, lowering methane emissions could prevent up to [0.3°C](#) of warming by 2050. We must rapidly reduce methane emissions to curb the current growing rise in global temperatures.

While over 150 countries have agreed to collectively reduce global methane emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030 through the Global Methane Pledge, meeting this target will require significant efforts from all levels of government. Subnational jurisdictions are particularly suited to reducing methane emissions, as they serve as the primary regulators of emissions from agriculture, energy, and landfills in many cases. In addition, subnational actors like California have been early adopters of legally binding methane targets and have pioneered innovative ways to track and reduce methane emissions, including through the use of remote sensing and satellites. [SB 1383](#) establishes California methane emissions reduction targets.

Subnational Action

Recognizing the unique role of subnational jurisdictions and building on their methane and overall climate leadership, the governments of California; Queretaro, Mexico; Gauteng, South Africa; Espirito Santo, Brazil; Cross-River State, Nigeria; Yucatan, Mexico; and Delhi, India launched the Subnational Methane Action Initiative. We anticipate adding numerous additional jurisdictions by the time of the global climate change conference (COP 28) in November. The Initiative includes substantive provisions to:

- Establish or name existing methane action coordinator/s in government,

- Determine methane emissions inventories (consistent with IPCC methods) and baselines, and commit to regular updates,
- Set a methane emissions reduction goal,
- Create a methane action plan,
- Designate a point of contact to coordinate methane leak information from remote sensing and other sources, where available, and a system to ensure that leak information is shared with facilities, regulators, and the public,
- Meet as needed to share information and lessons learned,
- Develop a strategy to educate government officials and the public on methane.

CLEE, in conjunction with the State of California and the Initiative, will provide support to Initiative members in:

- Establishing methane emissions inventories,
- Creating methane action plans,
- Developing a methodology for contacting facilities with methane leaks, including from satellite data,
- Convening meetings and data exchanges to share information and best practices among Initiative jurisdictions and beyond,
- Developing strategies to educate government officials and communicate to the public the impacts of methane emissions and the benefits of methane emissions abatement.

The Initiative provides an important step toward accelerated action.