



## **| Gas Is Not The Solution**

Gas leaks are common, threaten our communities, and are costly to consumers

Although gas has been touted as a relatively clean source of energy that can help our state reduce global warming emissions, recent research shows that methane leaks during the production, transportation, and storage of gas can erode or nullify its climate benefits.

A growing body of research is also finding that indoor use of gas appliances may be hazardous to our health. Burning methane gas releases byproducts including carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide. Running a stove and oven for only 45 minutes can produce pollution levels that would be illegal outdoors. And epidemiological research has suggested that children in homes with gas stoves are 42 percent more likely to have asthma than children in homes with electric stoves.

“Renewable natural gas” also consists largely of methane — the same as fossil gas. Landfills, agriculture, and other “renewable” sources of gas are tiny and, even if ramped up to their full potential, could replace only a small share of America’s fossil gas.

While the list of problems with gas continue to increase, our concerns largely center around leaks, threats to our communities, and costs to consumers.



*Recent gas explosions in Coolidge and Chandler have resulted in deaths, injuries, and destruction of property.*



*Nationally, over the last decade, thousands of incidents related to gas gathering, transmission, and distribution have been reported.*

*Since electric stoves do not emit high levels of pollutants like nitrogen oxide, they are inherently cleaner than gas stoves.*



## Gas Leaks Are Common

Gas leaks are widespread, hazardous to the public's health and safety, and costly. Anywhere there is gas — from the point at which it emerges from a well, through the gathering and transmission pipelines that carry gas from the well to the market, all the way to storage facilities and the distribution lines that carry gas to homes and businesses — there is the possibility for leaks. While some gas is released intentionally as part of normal operations such as opening and closing valves, large amounts of gas are unintentionally released, most often due to malfunctioning equipment, corrosion, and natural causes like flooding.

## Gas Leaks Threaten Our Communities

Gas disasters endanger public health and safety and can cause massive damage to homes, businesses, and communities. When gas lines leak, rupture, or are otherwise damaged, the gas released can explode. When explosions take place, they can result in deaths, injuries, and forced evacuations.

## Gas Leaks Are Costly To Consumers

Typically, gas companies are not incentivized to reduce lost or unaccounted-for gas, and therefore consumers end up paying for gas that never reaches our homes and businesses. In fact, gas leaks have already wasted significant amounts of gas which has cost American consumers billions of dollars. And according to the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, roughly 35 percent of the country's gas distribution mains and 56 percent of gas transmission pipelines were installed prior to 1970 — which makes outdated gas infrastructure even more susceptible to corrosion and leaks.

## It's Time to Move Beyond Gas

Arizona PIRG does not support resource-intensive efforts to create "RNG," such as through gasification, nor do we support large-scale infrastructure decisions that create a barrier to clean energy and electrification. We do not oppose efforts of capturing and using methane from sources such as landfills and wastewater treatment, as long as they do not create an incentive for the creation of more waste and consumers benefit.

However, instead of continuing to pour billions of dollars into new fossil fuel infrastructure, our policy-makers should increase investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy, such as solar.

Specifically, our state and national leaders should prioritize the following:

- Electrify home heating – Switching to electric heating powered by renewable energy would eliminate carbon emissions from home heating and facilitate the transition to a safer and cleaner energy system.
- Fix high priority leaks – Repairs to gas infrastructure should be focused on addressing leaks that pose a threat to public health and safety. Policies should discourage investment in new or expanded gas infrastructure and encourage spending on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.
- Hold gas companies accountable – Gas companies should be held accountable for reducing lost gas and more diligently maintaining and operating their equipment to avoid further leaks and explosions. Public policies should regulate methane emissions and prevent gas companies from passing the costs of lost gas on to consumers.