



For Immediate Release:

March 30, 2016

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Natural Gas Utilities Launch New EPA Program to Reduce Emissions

Washington, D.C. – Natural gas utilities are working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. 33 natural gas utilities today launched the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge Program](#) whereby oil and gas companies can make and track commitments to reduce emissions and showcase their efforts to improve air quality and capture and monetize this valuable energy resource. The companies, which represent 66% of the natural gas customers served in the United States, are Founding Partners of the program and joined EPA's Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation Janet McCabe at an event during the Global Methane Forum being held in Washington, DC to kick off the Challenge.

AGA Chairman Ralph LaRossa, President and Chief Operating Officer of Public Service Electric & Gas Co. in New Jersey, spoke at the event saying, "For more than two decades, natural gas utilities have worked productively with EPA to share best practices, helping to improve distribution operations and reduce emissions. EPA has recognized the success of our voluntary efforts by continuing to address emissions from distribution through voluntary actions rather than regulatory mandates. We look forward to working with EPA and our members on this ambitious voluntary program."

The American Gas Association and many its members were founders of the original Natural Gas STAR program in 1993. According to the EPA, the 50 AGA member companies participating in the Natural Gas STAR program [reduced emissions](#) by 0.8 billion cubic feet in 2013 and a total of 46.2 billion cubic feet since 1993.

In 2014, the AGA Board of Directors approved a set of [voluntary guidelines for reducing natural gas emissions](#). The report serves as a resource for AGA members to assist in evaluating potential options for distribution systems. Many of these guidelines now appear in EPA's Methane Challenge list of "Best Management Practices."

A concerted effort by natural gas utilities to upgrade our nation's pipeline network in order to enhance safety has also contributed significantly to a declining trend in emissions from the natural gas distribution system. A [report](#) published last year led by a team from Washington State University and sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund found that as little as 0.1 percent of the natural gas delivered nationwide is emitted from local distribution systems.

Companies can join the Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge Program at any time and several plan to join in the coming months. The companies joining the Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge Program as Founding Partners today include:

Ameren Illinois
Atmos Energy Corporation
AVANGRID Inc.
Avista Corp.
CenterPoint Energy
CMS Energy Corporation
Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc.
Dominion Energy
DTE Energy
Duke Energy Corporation
Eversource Energy
Exelon Corporation
Knoxville Utilities Board
Laclede Gas Company
MidAmerican Energy Company
Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.
National Grid
NiSource Inc.
ONE Gas Inc.
Orange & Rockland Utilities, Inc.
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Peoples Gas (Chicago)
Peoples Gas (Pittsburgh)
Piedmont Gas Natural Gas Company Inc.
Public Service Electric & Gas Company
Questar Gas Company
Sempra Energy
Southwest Gas Corporation
UGI Corporation
Vectren Corporation
Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.
Washington Gas Light Company
Xcel Energy Inc.

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About the [American Gas Association](#)

The American Gas Association, founded in 1918, represents more than 200 local energy companies that deliver clean natural gas throughout the United States. There are more than 72 million residential, commercial and industrial natural gas customers in the U.S., of which 95 percent — just under 69 million customers — receive their gas from AGA members. Today, natural gas meets more than one-fourth of the United States' energy needs.