

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Climate, Environmental Justice Groups Call US-EU Methane Reduction Commitment a Long Overdue First Step;
Urge Biden Administration to Grant Petition and Reject Big Ag's False Methane Solutions**

Today, environmental justice, rural community and environmental groups across the United States recognized the U.S. and European Union's joint pledge to reduce methane emissions by 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030 as a positive if insufficient step, while urging the Biden Administration not to follow through on mitigation efforts that rely upon false industry-championed climate "solutions". In particular, they call on the administration to use existing legal authority to require methane limits and to reject factory farm gas, branded "biogas" by Big Ag and Big Oil & Gas, as a means of reducing methane from industrial agriculture operations. Factory farm gas technology props up the factory farm system at the expense of Black, Latino, Indigenous, and white rural communities and further harms the land, air, and water across America.

According to [an exclusive report in Reuters](#), a draft of a climate deal between the U.S. and EU will likely be announced Friday, calling upon the signatories to reduce methane via "technology innovation as well as incentives and partnerships with farmers."

In April, a group of organizations listed below [petitioned the EPA](#) to reduce methane by regulating industrial hog and dairy operations under the Clean Air Act, and to reject so-called solutions such as factory farm gas championed by the industrial agriculture industry. The petition calls on the EPA to set emissions limits based on well-established pasture-based farms which provide myriad co-benefits including reducing climate, air, and water pollution while supporting rural economies to build back better.

These 25 petitioners issued the following joint statement today in response to the *Reuters* report:

"The agreement between the U.S. and EU to secure a climate future for all of us via a methane reduction agreement is long overdue, if insufficient in terms of a percentage of emissions reduction by 2030. However, the Biden Administration's and European governments' choosing the correct method to go about reducing the methane produced by industrial animal ag operations is at least as important as the joint commitment itself.

The draft language of the agreement about voluntary and technological innovation reported on this week is alarming. Investing in factory farm gas is not a genuine climate solution. It is a scheme to further entrench the factory farm system at the expense of the air, land, and water of Black, Latino, Indigenous, and white rural communities. It's not too late for the Biden Administration to change course to the correct method of reducing methane in this sector:

grant the petition, use existing Clean Air Act authority to limit emissions, and shift industrial dairy and hog operations from liquefied manure systems to pasture-based farms thus regulating and reducing emissions from dirty operations harming rural areas across the globe.

The president has committed to ‘following the science’ on climate solutions and placing environmental justice at the heart of climate policy. If he is serious about those commitments, he must regulate emissions from industrial hog and dairy facilities that pollute, and make climate change worse in order to restore rural communities, stabilize our climate, and advance environmental justice.”

[These groups’ April petition](#) calls for immediate action from the EPA to exercise its existing authority under the Clean Air Act and fulfill its obligation to protect public health, rural communities, and our land, air, and water by listing and regulating industrial dairy and hog operations. Industrial dairy and hog operations are defined in the petition as facilities that confine at least 500 cows or 1,000 hogs without access to pasture while liquefying manure. As major sources of the super pollutant methane, the category endangers public health and welfare and now accounts for 33 percent of agricultural methane emissions, 13 percent of total U.S. methane emissions, and 1.3 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Signatories to the April methane petition to the EPA:

Association of Irrigated Residents
Center for Food Safety
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Dakota Rural Action
Environmental Integrity Project
Farm Forward
Food & Water Watch
Friends of Family Farmers
Friends of the Earth
Government Accountability Project
Great Lakes Environmental Law Center
GreenLatinos
Idaho Organization of Resource Councils
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Land Stewardship Project
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
North Carolina Environmental Justice Network
Northeast Organic Farming Association, Massachusetts Chapter
Organic Consumers Association
Public Justice Foundation
Sierra Club
Socially Responsible Agricultural Project

Also signing onto today’s joint statement

Earthjustice

Nationwide Community Member Support for the April Methane Petition:

“All three of our rivers are listed under the EPA’s impaired waters list. Infants in our community have been poisoned. We need the EPA to recognize this petition because our grandchildren can’t play outside when manure is being sprayed in the air, and we want them to enjoy our farm the way we did growing up.”

-Nancy Utesch, a farmer and organizer with Kewaunee Cares of Kewaunee, Wis.

“Industrial agriculture oppresses communities of color. We stand in solidarity with the mostly Black North Carolina communities and mostly Latino California communities who are fighting against factory farms in their backyards, too. We stand in solidarity with the meatpacking workers, who are mostly people of color and are being exploited by the industrial ag system.”

-Kim Stephens, a veteran, law student, and member of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement in Story County, Iowa.

“This problem starts in our rural backyards, but affects people across the country and beyond. This is about caring for our communities, being a good neighbor, and reminding our elected representatives that their job is to work for us.”

-Barb Kalbach, a fourth-generation family farmer, nurse, and member of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement from Adair County, Iowa.

“Public money should be used for the public good. But when taxpayer dollars fund factory farm gas infrastructure and pipelines, our government is taking money out of communities to keep an industrial agriculture system in place that hurts them. This system depends on our public dollars, but gives nothing in return.”

-Edith Haenel, a retired clinical social worker and member of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement in Worth County, Iowa.

“We have already seen how Biden has issued several executive orders that promise to make real climate progress, and now we need them to recognize the impact of factory farm emissions and act accordingly.”

- Lynn Utesch, a farmer and organizer with Kewaunee Cares of Kewaunee, Wisconsin.