Antoinette Reyes of the Sierra Club writes authoritatively about a subject of which she is completely ignorant. Methane is swamp gas, the same natural gas we use for our kitchen stoves and to heat our houses. Methane is colorless, tasteless, and odorless, it is so benign in small concentrations that mercaptan is added to it to make it smell so that humans can smell a gas leak. Methane has a molecular weight of 16, so it is buoyant. Any leak will loft into the atmosphere since the molecular weight of air is almost the same as Nitrogen, 28.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has part of its makeup the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, ATSDR. If Ms Reyes had looked it up, she would have found that Methane is not toxic and is not listed as having an OSHA Public Exposure Limit.

Further, Ms Reyes of the Sierra Club is not endowed with critical thinking skills. The health effects she reports are likely the results of leaks of Hydrogen Sulfide gas, molecular weight 34, slightly heavier than air. Not methane. She is shooting at the wrong target.

With respect to Global Warming potential, methane oxidizes in the atmosphere the way it does in a gas stove, only slower. So, while it is possible to measure a greenhouse effect in a pipe filled with methane, the oxidization of methane in the real world by the oxygen we breathe yields CO2 and Water. If Ms Reyes is truly interested in methane in New Mexico she could look up the methane maps published by the University of Bremen Germany, one is at http://www.iup.unibremen.de/sciamachy/NIR_NADIR_WFM_DOAS/scia_ch4_2003_usa.png Observe methane concentrations above the swamps of East Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida and all the swampy areas you might guess, and more. But not in New Mexico.

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