

# Natural gas leaks exacerbate climate change

By Jonathan Thompson, High Country News

There have been 12.8 billion cubic feet natural gas released since 2010 in nearly 700 “incidents” reported to the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. This occurred in the nation’s natural gas gathering and transmission systems.



Natural gas leaks are not rare. Photo/Tod Baker

Another 36 million cubic feet of natural gas escaped during incidents from the distribution systems that deliver gas to homes and businesses during that time. Added up, it’s enough gas to heat more than 170,000 homes for a year.

Oil pipeline busts, like the one that wrecked the shoreline near Santa Barbara, recently, tend to get most of the attention these days – oil is sticky, nasty stuff. But natural gas infrastructure failures are equally alarming. Punctured natural gas pipelines can be dangerous. The reported incidents killed 70 people and injured more than 300. They can be expensive. Total costs in lost gas and property damage was nearly \$700 million.

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