United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2026

Ryan M. Lance
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
ConocoPhillips
925 North Eldridge Parkway
Houston TX 77079

Dear Mr. Lance,

I write regarding a significant discrepancy between reported methane emissions in the Permian Basin and actual emissions as observed by methane-detecting technologies. According to data collected between May 2024 and June 2025 by the advanced methane-detecting satellite MethaneSAT, actual methane emissions in the Permian are approximately four times higher than emissions reported in Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Greenhouse Gas Inventory, which is informed by industry-reported data.[1] The inconsistency between emissions reported to EPA's Greenhouse Gase Inventory and satellite data suggest that significant, previously unreported emissions may be occurring and that substantial opportunities exist to reduce waste, improve operational efficiency, and mitigate climate change.

Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas, responsible for approximately 30 percent of global warming.[2] Methane also exacerbates local air pollution and drives the formation of smog, which causes severe health problems and premature deaths,[3] and significantly stunts crop yields.[4] Moreover, leaked methane is wasted methane: because captured methane is a commodity, methane abatement in the oil and gas sector can largely be done at no net cost.[5] This is particularly true at a moment in time when natural gas and LNG prices are spiking due to the ongoing war in Iran. Capturing all of this wasted methane would help increase global supplies of natural gas and reduce prices for consumers and industry.

Many large oil and gas companies, including several operating in the Permian, already conduct methane-detection flyovers using technology firms such as Bridger Photonics,[6] and some access

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[1] Martha Pskowski and Phil McKenna, "MethaneSAT Releases First Global Assessment of Oil and Gas Climate Pollution," *Inside Climate News,* Feb. 6, 2026, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/06022026/methanesat-climate-pollution-global-assessment/.

[2] International Energy Agency [IEA], "Global Methane Tracker 2022" (2022), https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2022; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (2021), https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/.

[3] American Lung Association, "Ozone", https://www.lung.org/clean-air/outdoors/what-makes-air-unhealthy/ozone.

[4] Surat Dewan and Anita Lakhani, "Impact of ozone pollution on crop yield, human health, and associated economic costs in the Indo-Gangetic plains", *Science of the Total Environment*, Vol. 945 (Oct. 1, 2024), https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0048969724039676.

[5] IEA, "Global Methane Tracker 2024" (2024), https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/key-findings.

[6] Bridger Photonics, "Who We Work With", https://www.bridgerphotonics.com/who-we-work-with.

satellite-based data from organizations such as Carbon Mapper.[7] MethaneSAT's findings raise questions about how these data sets are being used and whether they are being incorporated into emissions reporting and mitigation strategies. These issues are especially relevant given that numerous companies have signed the Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter, committing to achieve near-zero methane emissions by 2030.[8] Leaving substantial quantities of methane emissions unaddressed would be inconsistent with those commitments and other industry-wide climate goals.

To help us better understand the discrepancy between reported methane emissions and those observed in the Permian, please respond to the following questions no later than April 1, 2026:

1. What steps is your company currently taking to address methane emissions in the Permian Basin?

2. What technologies, methods, or monitoring programs does your company use to measure methane emissions?

3. What are your estimated methane emissions from ConocoPhillips activities in the Permian Basin? What are those estimates based on? Please list and describe the empirical measurement approaches you use, including continuous monitoring systems, flyovers, and satellite data. If your estimates rely on algorithmic modeling, please describe.

4. Please produce any documents, reports, or data analyses related to items (1) through (3).

Sincerely,

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works

[7] Oil and Gas Climate Initiative [OGCI], "Carbon Mapper", https://www.ogci.com/methane-library-item/carbon-mapper/.
[8] OGCI, "Our Signatories", https://www.ogdc.org/signatories/.