 

draft of Oil & Gas Work Group workplan scope

October 26, 2021

**Overview**

Oil and gas exploration and production activities are significant air pollution sources in the western United States. There is wide variation by basin, in terms of the types of wells and equipment operated and quantities of hydrocarbons produced, the number of wells to be maintained and to be newly drilled, the extraction practices and emission control technology applied in the drilling-completion-maintenance-production activities. Taxes on produced hydrocarbon resources fund state, tribal, and federal governments, and the commodity prices are subject to wide variation affecting both existing production and emissions, as well as development of new and/or replacement wells.

With the oil and gas sector continuing to experience rapid change and innovation over time, air regulatory agencies are responding to health and welfare issues under the federal Clean Air Act as well as through state and tribal authorities. These include jurisdiction-wide emissions reporting and control requirements, linked to efforts to address local issues and impacts. In the WESTAR-WRAP region, oil and gas exploration and production activity is concentrated in California, Alaska, and the Intermountain Region, with emissions management by states, tribes, and EPA. The produced hydrocarbons are transported with various methods for further processing and are then used in dozens or hundreds of products. The use of produced hydrocarbons for power, industrial, and commercial applications is ubiquitous in the U.S. and other well-developed economies.

Studies point to the need for improvements in the exploration and production emissions inventory to make those estimates more consistent, accurate, and complete across the various jurisdictions, as being one of the most needed datasets for air quality planning. Related analysis needs include:

* More fully and more accurately characterizing emissions from individual exploration and production equipment and activity processes;
* Reconciling results of top-down vs. bottom-up studies;
* Identifying methods to address the super-emitter phenomena across the many types of production and differing geographic areas; and
* Improving emissions estimates for leaking and venting of tanks and other systems.

The Oil and Gas Work Group (OGWG) efforts on these analysis topics will improve reported data quality, performance of air quality models, and exposure estimates. The OGWG also has an important role to coordinate regional communication and knowledge-sharing among WESTAR-WRAP members. The OGWG will address the members’ programs and data collection. The OGWG will provide oversight and coordinate efforts with projects and activities for WESTAR-WRAP and with other groups related to Oil and Gas.

**Responsibilities and Deliverables**

The Oil and Gas Work Group (OGWG) will organize teams to focus on, address, organize analyses, and report on 3 key topics from the preceding section:

* Oil and Gas-related air quality management needs of the WESTAR-WRAP membership;​
* ​Improving and reporting emission inventories by and for WESTAR-WRAP members; and​
* Track efforts to implement rules and control strategies, assess compliance activities, and evolving emissions management structures of the WESTAR-WRAP member agencies.

This work must take into consideration differing levels of expertise, programmatic approaches, cultural necessities, and needs by agency. Several of these activities involve close coordination, facilitated by the Technical Steering Committee (TSC), as is done with other WRAP Work Groups.

**Operations and Reporting**

The Co-Chairs will provide a summary report to the TSC at each TSC/WG Co-Chairs meeting, about the status of activities, findings, and work products for the topics described above. The Co-Chairs, with support from WESTAR-WRAP staff, will maintain an active open membership composed of interested state, tribal, local, and federal air agency and land manager experts, and publish the OGWG membership list and track participation on the [Oil & Gas Work Group webpage](http://www.wrapair2.org/OGWG.aspx). No formal detailed workplan is required but welcome.

The OGWG will have regular virtual or in-person meetings (*preferred interval?*) to manage activities and provide oversight to projects. Subcommittees or Teams to be defined by the OGWG will execute, track, and provide oversight for both in-kind and/or contractor-supported OGWG projects and will meet at self-defined separate intervals. The task-oriented topics and responsibilities for a Subcommittee or Team will be a subset of the bulleted topics above from this Responsibilities and Deliverables section. The leads for Teams and Subcommittees will meet monthly with the OGWG Co-Chairs to note progress. The topics above will need additional clarification and definition in the process of defining a Subcommittee’s or a Team’s scopes, assignments, and intended deliverables in writing. Any Teams and Subcommittees will report regularly to the OGWG. The OGWG Co-Chairs will plan and direct the regular calls and meetings, and with assistance from WESTAR-WRAP staff, take the lead in communications and other necessary TSC and Board interaction.

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On the [Oil & Gas Work Group webpage](http://www.wrapair2.org/OGWG.aspx), continue display of the existing OGWG webpage’s posted materials and add relevant and currently useful files from the [WRAP website Emissions tab](http://www.wrapair2.org/emissions.aspx) labeled in the Resources column as “Oil & Gas Projects”.