

**Resolution to Reduce Green House Gas Emissions from Hydraulic Fracturing  
Operations on University Lands (UL)**

**Faculty Senate Resolution**

As required in the University of Texas System’s 2009 *UTS169 Sustainability Practices Policy*, University of Texas System “institutions” will continue to implement well-thought-out initiatives that increase efficiencies, reduce emissions, and promote sustainability practices”.<sup>1</sup>

The University of Texas System should be a global leader in reducing green house gas (GHG) emissions, and serve as an exemplar for the sustainable development of oil and gas on university lands. Therefore, the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Faculty Senate joins with the University of Texas at Austin Faculty Senate in urging the Chancellor of the University of Texas System to commission a Task Force consisting of University of Texas System scientists, engineers and others to create a Methane-Emissions Control Plan with a goal to reduce GHG emissions on University Lands by 50% or more within 5 years. The Control Plan should establish an emissions baseline and a peer-reviewed emissions database, identify best practices to accelerate the reduction of GHG emissions to the lowest achievable levels, and assure the highest standards of environmental stewardship on University Lands.

**Rationale**

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the international body for assessing the science related to global warming, avoiding the worst impacts of climate change requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 80% from 1990 levels by 2050.<sup>2</sup> The earth’s average temperature has risen 0.8<sup>0</sup> C since 1880 while carbon dioxide emissions now exceed 400 ppm, the highest in recent geologic time. Methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases, is 84 times more powerful than carbon dioxide in the first two decades after its release and is responsible for over 25% of the global warming we are witnessing today.<sup>3</sup> The US EPA states that without significant reductions to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, temperatures are projected to rise an additional 0.3 to 4.8°C over the next one hundred years. This increase will enhance the severity of natural weather events (e.g., precipitation, floods, droughts, etc.), accelerate sea level rise, and contribute to significant financial losses, economic impact, and the displacement of coastal communities in Texas, the United States, and the globe<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *UTS 169* Section 2, <https://www.utsystem.edu/sites/default/files/policies/uts/uts169.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> IPCC Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/>

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Defense Fund, <https://www.edf.org/methane-other-important-greenhouse-gas>

<sup>4</sup> US EPA, [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climatechange/climate-change-basic-information\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climatechange/climate-change-basic-information_.html)

There are approximately 9,000 oil and gas wells drilled on 1.4 million of the 2.1 million acres of land owned by University Lands (UL), a department administered by the University of Texas System.<sup>5</sup> Operators that drill on University Lands are required to meet state and federal regulations when drilling on these lands and available emissions data from 2012 to 2017 indicate that methane emissions have decreased 13% on University Lands, a tribute to their management. In spite of this decrease an analysis done by Environment Texas which was based on EPA and other publicly available data shows that from 2009 to 2014 oil and gas production on University Lands still produced the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent of 11.7 million tons of carbon. This is comparable to releases from 2.5 million automobiles. Future projections indicate oil and gas production from University Lands will increase. In response we must accelerate and intensify our efforts to reduce GHG emissions from oil and gas production to the lowest possible levels efficiently, effectively and economically to meet our sustainability mandate.

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<sup>5</sup> University Lands, <http://www.utlands.utsystem.edu/Home/OGDevelopment>