



EARTHWORKS

# IMPACT REPORT 2024

## When communities demand to be heard, those in power listen.

This year we have seen a string of encouraging signs that, at least for this moment, we have the attention of governing bodies and corporations that hold the key to stopping destructive mining and oil and gas practices. Many of these victories have taken years — decades even — to achieve, and they are far from a done deal.

If there is one major message to walk away with, it's that it will take all of us working together to secure our safe future. That's why you play such an important role at Earthworks.

— Thank you for your support!

## FRONTLINE PROGRESS

### Navajo Nation Leadership Joins Earthworks Field Tour

This year we took an exciting step forward when Vice President of the Navajo Nation, Richelle Montoya, joined us on a field tour in New Mexico. The result of months of outreach by Earthworks' Kendra Pinto to Navajo Nation leadership, the tour highlighted some of the harms caused by the oil and gas industry to Tribal lands. We have scheduled a follow-up tour with VP Montoya for this fall, and are hopeful that she will be a strong advocate for our work with the Navajo Nation moving forward.



Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya views an oil and gas well site through the optical gas imaging camera.

### Oro Cruz Mining Project Canceled

The Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe and their allies, including Earthworks, recently celebrated a victory when authorities rejected the proposed SMP Gold Corporation Oro Cruz gold exploration project. If approved, the mining project would have disturbed 20.54 acres of desert ecosystem, built 8 miles of roads, drilled 65 holes down to 800 feet, and used 2,000 gallons of water per day. Most notably, it would have irreversibly damaged a cultural landscape that is held sacred by the Quechan Tribe near the Colorado River. The Tribe has recently proposed the Kwtsán National Monument to permanently protect the area.

### Making Companies Clean Up, Not Taxpayers

New Mexico activists are focused on limiting taxpayer liability and raising the bonding rates required of oil and gas companies to clean up their facilities. In support of this unique approach, we have focused on monitoring abandoned well sites. Sites often remain in temporarily abandoned status for years, and are functionally unregulated and uninspected. While temporarily abandoned sites are supposed to be shut in, we continue to document emissions from them. We are using our OGI surveys as leverage for financial assurances so operators are responsible for the entire life cycle of the well, even after it has been plugged.



A leaking abandoned well in New Mexico.



## OUR BIGGEST WINS OF THE YEAR INSIDE →

- ▶ Historic pause on gas exports on the Gulf Coast.
- ▶ Community evidence shuts down Prospect Energy.
- ▶ Phase two for methane reductions.
- ▶ Protecting the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

# 2024 Big Wins Across the U.S.

## Construction Halted on Ambler Road Project— Alaska

A disruptive 211-mile industrial mining road harming wildlife, salmon and clean water is probably the last thing you expect to see in national parklands. This was almost the future for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and adjacent lands, until communities and Tribal members stepped in to advocate for the land's protection from the proposed Ambler Road.

In April, the Biden administration rejected the permit for the proposed road, protecting important food resources for Alaskan rural communities and the migratory route of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd — one of the longest land migrations on earth. This is a tremendous win for these Alaskan communities.

Since 2021, we have worked alongside frontline communities and Tribes to stop this project. This past December, Earthworks' Bonnie Gestring joined a fly-in visit to Washington, D.C. for three Alaskan Tribes and our conservation partners to meet with key stakeholders so that Tribal members could express their concerns about the proposed road and its impacts to their livelihoods. We also helped mobilize 3,588 public comments delivered to the Bureau of Land Management that expressed opposition to the road.

We are still expecting proponents of the Ambler Road to challenge the Biden administration's decision. Our work is cut out for us. So in 2025 we will engage with decision-makers as we continue our efforts to oppose the Ambler Road, along with a number of other irresponsible mining projects that threaten lands and communities in the western U.S.

## An Historic Pause on Gas Exports—**Gulf Coast**

In the fall of 2023, 75,000 people from across the country gathered in New York City as part of Climate Week to pressure the Biden administration to stop federal approvals of fossil fuel projects, declare a climate emergency and usher in a just transition. Earthworkers and our allies from the Gulf Coast joined the crowd. Over the past year, Earthworks had worked in coalition to organize these efforts as part of #EndFossilFuels, and the moment represented a culmination of those efforts.



Earthworks staff gathered with over 75,000 people last fall to pressure the Biden administration to declare a climate emergency and pause all new oil and gas infrastructure.

On January 26, 2024 the Biden administration announced an historic pause of all pending permits for proposed LNG (liquefied natural gas) export terminals in the U.S. Gulf Coast until it can be proved that these are in the public's best interest. Although a Louisiana federal court ultimately blocked the Administration's pause in July, Earthworks and allies successfully gained the ear of the Administration in the months before their decision.



In the coming years, Earthworks will continue to support grassroots organizations in Louisiana and Texas as they demonstrate that oil, gas, and petrochemical companies are not safe neighbors.



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Many of these victories have taken years, decades even, and they still require all of our vigilance.

## Community Evidence Shuts Down Prospect Energy—Colorado

Von Bortz knew something was wrong when the sulfuric, rotten egg smell started and he was getting dizzy, with severe headaches and nausea. Bortz lives in Larimer County, Colorado, which is home to 370,000 people and 105 active drilling wells. A mismanaged oil and gas operation can hurt a lot of people. And it did. He knew there was oil and gas drilling nearby, but he didn't think it would make him sick. However, Bortz learned that he was getting sick from ongoing exposure to toxic hydrogen sulfide — by pollution from a company called Prospect Energy.

Earthworks' Andrew Klooster worked with the community to provide a constant drumbeat of evidence and demands to hold Prospect Energy accountable for their negligence and disregard that made it impossible for neighbors to breathe clean air. Finally



Von Bortz talks to a reporter in front of Prospect Energy's oil and gas tanks.

this past July, after years of persistence from both Earthworks and our community partners, Larimer County and Prospect Energy came to an agreement — Prospect Energy will shut down and clean up the polluted facilities. We are hopeful

that a victory like this for Larimer County pressures other governments to value community testimony. It's a powerful reinforcement of our model at Earthworks — utilizing OGI evidence to pressure governments to shut down bad actors.



Watch the video of Von Bortz' battle for clean air at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG2m2iLBels](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG2m2iLBels)



## Methane Rule Next Steps: Pushing for Action—Federal

Focusing on Four Key States for Methane Reductions

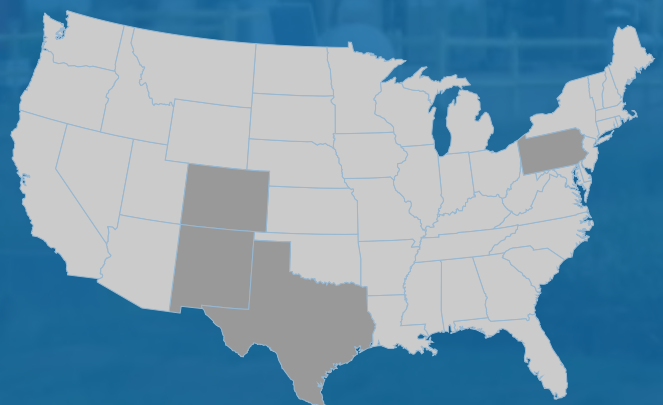
### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE METHANE REGULATIONS ARE IN PLACE?

After the EPA finalized updates to federal methane regulations, which could reduce methane by 58 million tons between 2024 and 2038, we knew we had to step up and make sure the regulations are properly implemented and enforced. A key to make these regulations a success is strong implementation by state and Tribal governments. While we celebrate this big win, we continue to mobilize to achieve durable methane reductions to protect our climate for future generations.

Here's our plan moving forward: Earthworks will focus its engagement in four states — Colorado, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Texas — that account for upward of 50 percent of total U.S. oil and gas production.

For states that put forward inadequate implementation plans, notably Texas, Earthworks will push the EPA to step in to create a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP). We expect that for states like Texas with very lax state regulations and enforcement, federal implementation of the methane rule is the only route to meaningfully reduce methane gas.

Earthworks will focus on Pennsylvania, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas to maximize enforcement of new methane regulations.





Anti-icing trucks spread fracking waste on roads.  
AP Photo / Gene J. Puskar.

# Toxic Waste Loophole

## OIL AND GAS COMPANIES ALLOWED TO SPREAD TOXIC SLURRY ON PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY ROADS

In Pennsylvania, community members are experiencing adverse health impacts in areas where oil and gas companies have been allowed to spread toxic slurry on county roads as a form of dust reduction. Earthworks' Charlie Palladino collaborated with Pennsylvania state legislators, including Representative Greg Vitali, Chairman of the Pennsylvania House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, to write a bill enforcing an outright ban on road spreading, eliminating any possibility of loopholes or misinterpretation in the future. The bill recently passed out of committee and now faces a full House vote, where it is expected to receive significant opposition in the Senate.

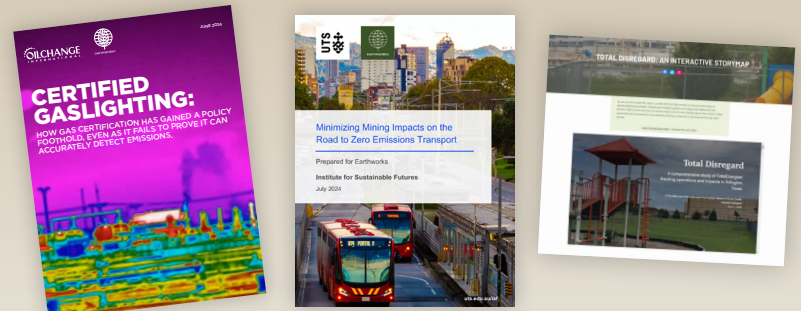
## Earthworks' Influence Helps Strengthen United Nations Report

The UN Secretary General Panel on critical minerals is one of the most important voices providing global policymakers with recommendations based on scientific research and setting standards. This year Earthworks positively shaped the General Panel's final 2024 report by emphasizing two key principles:



Earthworks' Jan Morrill at the UN General Panel.

- 1) The need to transition to renewable energy cannot justify irresponsible practices at any point in the supply chain, from mining to recycling. No one should be left behind without fair treatment, legal redress, and the chance to meaningfully participate in decision-making.
- 2) Indigenous Peoples have the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent for any mining projects on their lands.



### Vital reports released in the last year include:

- ▶ *Certified Gaslighting* — It's been one year since Earthworks and Oil Change International released the first investigative report into so-called "gas certification" schemes. No matter the label methane gas is a still threat to people and the planet.
- ▶ *Minimizing Mining Impacts on the Road to Zero Emissions Transport* — We have the technology and strategies available to avoid the harmful impacts of mineral intensive electric vehicle production. Now we just have to implement them.
- ▶ *Total Disregard, A comprehensive study of TotalEnergies' fracking operations and impacts in Arlington Texas* — Earthworks used Optical Gas Imaging (OGI) to record TotalEnergies' harmful pollution near homes and even playgrounds in Arlington, Texas.

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