



The oil and natural gas industry takes seriously its commitment to managing waste and actively considers ways to reduce, reuse, recycle, or treat many waste products generated from its exploration and production operations. It recognizes that effective waste management strategies protect public health and the environment while still providing the country with vast energy resources.

BACKGROUND:

Waste from oil and natural gas activities are managed in accordance with state and federal environmental laws, as well as numerous industry recommended practices and standards. In many states, companies submit waste management plans as part of the permitting process to ensure that waste management options are carefully considered long before drilling ever begins.

The industry generally manages waste in a tiered process designed to best protect public and environmental health: reduce, reuse/recycle/treat, and dispose. Reduction involves efforts like decreasing the volumes of waste generated and determining if more environmentally friendly (but equally effective) chemical substitutes are available. The second tier involves reclaiming and reusing as much waste as possible, using treatments that reduce the waste produced, thereby reducing the amounts that have to be disposed. The third tier involves environmentally sound and responsible methods of disposing of generated waste materials.¹



FAST FACTS:

- There are four general categories of exploration and production wastes associated with operations. They include drilling muds and residuals, produced water, associated wastes and some industrial wastes.
- States are the primary regulators of oil and natural gas waste management due to the fact that regulations may differ due to local climate, geology, hydrology, and legal or administrative frameworks.
- The State Review of Oil and Natural Gas Environmental Regulations (STRONGER) is a non-profit multi-stakeholder organization which specializes in assessing the overall framework of the environmental regulations supporting oil and natural gas operations. Their collaborative review teams include industry, regulators, and environmental/public interest stakeholders.²

REFERENCES:

1. [“Solid Waste,”](#) Intermountain Oil and Gas BMP Project.
2. [“State Review of Oil and Natural Gas Environmental Regulations.”](#)