

London named the gap. Will New York close it?

Coal mine methane was named on the agenda in London and then not discussed. Climate Week NYC is the test of whether that repeats.

BY KAJ EMBRÉN • THE METHANE BRIEF • ISSUE NO. 19 • SEPTEMBER 20, 2026



Climate Week NYC, 20–27 September 2026. © StructureVision - Envato

One-fifth. On average, that is the share of steel's near-term climate impact that comes from methane released upstream at metallurgical coal mines, according to UNEP's International Methane Emissions Observatory. It is measurable, it is attributable, and much of it can be abated with technology that exists today.

The room in London

Now hold that against a second data point. During London Climate Action Week, the House of Lords convened a stakeholder meeting on methane mitigation in the fossil fuel sector. The printed agenda said “oil, gas, and coal.” I was in the room on 22 June. Coal mine methane, as a category, was not discussed. Neither was the abatement technology, nor the financing that would deploy it at scale. The Clean Air Task Force's own programme page says half of emissions from coal today can be abated with existing technology. That sentence was not the meeting's subject.

An environmentalist and an engineer

Weeks earlier, The [Methane Brief](#) had recorded a very different conversation. [Jonathon Porritt](#), a foundational figure of the British environmental movement, met [Richard Mattus](#), the Swedish engineer who led the 2025 [UNECE Best Practice Guidance](#) on abating methane from coal mines. They had never met before, and they arrived at the same place from opposite starting points. The methane from mines operating today, thermal

coal in major Asian economies and coking coal for steel everywhere, is released unabated, while the technology and economics have been ready for a decade. Porritt called the verification of abatement “about as close as you can get to a gold standard.” Then he named the obstacle:

“The environmental NGOs don’t want to be connected to coal mining, and they’re pretty suspicious about credits, about carbon markets in general. So it’s a hard ask, let’s be honest.”

— Jonathon Porritt

The roadmap and the gap

That is the pattern I keep seeing. It connects to the roadmap I published before London, where I argued that the action happens between the COPs and that the fossil fuel conversation cannot be avoided forever. Santa Marta showed that when formal processes fail, coalitions find another way, and a fossil fuel roadmap is now heading to COP31 in Antalya in November. A roadmap away from fossil fuels with no chapter on the methane leaking from operating mines would have a hole in it. That is the conversation being avoided inside the conversation.

Methane at Climate Week NYC 2026

[Climate Week NYC runs 20–27 September](#) under the theme “the energy, the impact, and the action that we drive together.” Last year it drew over 100,000 people to more than 1,000 events, from closed-door ministerial roundtables to public art in Times Square. Methane has a place this week:

- **21 September: Climate Group’s “super pollutant sprint”**, built around its Subnational Methane Action Coalition (24 states and provinces).
- **21 September: UNEP IMEO’s investor roundtable** on methane in metcoal and steel, where investors representing over US\$10 trillion have called for greater transparency.
- **22 September: a high-level methane dialogue** during UNGA week, convened by UNEP, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the UN Secretary-General’s Climate Action Team.

The two UNEP sessions are not open to the public. In the roadmap I argued that ambitious climate action needs democratic legitimacy: people included, not just informed. Methane finance is no exception.

Detection is not delivery

The progress is real. In May, UNEP extended satellite methane alerts to coal for the first time, covering nearly 250 mines and more than half of global metallurgical coal production. But UNEP’s Martin Krause put the condition plainly: methane cuts are the fastest brake on warming “but only if emissions that are detected are rapidly fixed.” Detection is arriving faster than delivery. The published emphasis of the UNGA dialogue’s fossil fuel track is oil and gas. I would like to be proven wrong.

Coal mine methane is the one source we can switch off. Permafrost and wildfire methane we cannot. It is roughly 82 times more potent than CO₂ over 20 years and lasts about 12 years in the atmosphere.

Three questions for New York

Three questions I'm taking to New York:

1. **Who owns the fix at each detected mine?** A satellite alert is not an abatement project.
2. **Who pays?** This is a financing architecture problem, not another pledge. These credits are physical, and the measurement happens at the meter.
3. **Is coal mine methane named, or buried under “fossil fuels”?** What isn't named doesn't get funded.

In June I wrote that the climate crisis will not be solved in a single conference room. Methane won't be either, least of all a closed one. Whichever rooms you are in this week, ask the question.

For further information

Methane Brief

<https://methanebrief.org>

[LinkedIn Newsletter](#)

Climate Week NYC 2026

<https://www.climateweeknyc.org/>

UNEP: Investor Leadership Roundtable on Methane Emissions in Metcoal and Steel

<https://www.unep.org/events/unep-event/investor-leadership-roundtable-methane-emissions-metcoal-and-steel>

UNEP: Climate Summit 2026, High-Level Solutions Dialogue on Methane

<https://www.unep.org/events/unep-event/climate-summit-2026-high-level-solutions-dialogue-methane>

UNEP: Satellite methane alerts expanded to coal and waste sectors

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/satellite-methane-alerts-expanded-coal-and-waste-sectors-unep>

Climate Group: Subnational Methane Action Coalition

<https://www.theclimategroup.org/subnational-methane-action-coalition>

Clean Air Task Force: Fossil Fuel Regulatory Programme

<https://www.catf.us/methane/fossil-fuel-regulatory-programme/>

The Methane Brief, Issue No. 11: An Environmentalist, an Engineer, in a Heatwave (June 2026)

<https://methanebrief.org>

[Read on LinkedIn](#)

Also linked in the article: [Climate Group “super pollutant sprint” \(Climate Week NYC event page\)](#) · [Jonathon Porritt on LinkedIn](#) · [Richard Mattus on LinkedIn](#) · [UNECE Best Practice Guidance on methane abatement from coal mines \(PDF\)](#)

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