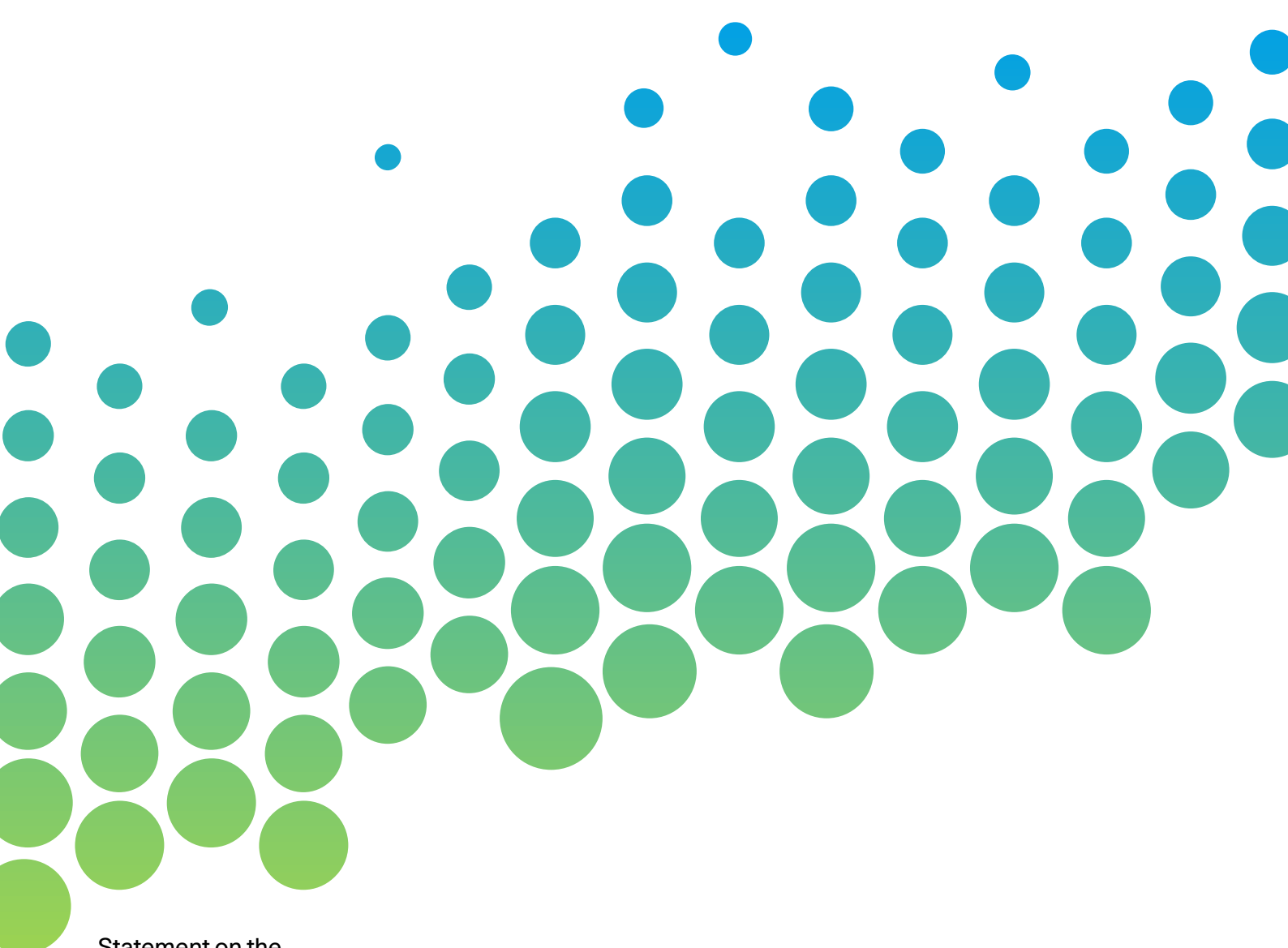




**Biomethan
Taskforce**

Eine Initiative der Gas- und
Wasserstoffwirtschaft



Statement on the

Federal Government's Draft Amendment to the Energy Industry Act (EnWG)

Berlin, June 2026

Introduction: A resilient, investment-secure and strategically planned regulatory framework for biomethane

The transformation of the gas networks will be a decisive factor in determining whether Germany can achieve its climate, resilience and security-of-supply objectives. Biomethane is not a transitional energy source; it is already an available, storable and system-supporting component of a climate-neutral energy system. It uses existing infrastructure, reduces import dependence, strengthens regional value creation and contributes to security of supply.

The Biomethane Taskforce expressly welcomes the legislator's objective of establishing a new legal framework for the transformation of gas infrastructure through the amendment to the Energy Industry Act (EnWG). At the same time, the industry sees a considerable need for improvement. The current legal framework does not yet provide sufficient investment and planning security for biomethane and gives inadequate consideration to its strategic role in the future energy system.

The central challenge is to reconcile investment security for biomethane with the legitimate transformation interests of network operators. Neither blanket decommissioning pathways nor blanket obligations to continue operating networks provide a viable solution. What is needed instead is a robust regulatory framework that considers biomethane, synthetic methane, hydrogen and its derivatives, as well as network transformation, together and is based on objective and transparent criteria.

The Biomethane Taskforce proposes four core elements.

1. Call for a national biomethane strategy

The EnWG amendment alone cannot definitively determine the future role of biomethane in the energy system. Germany therefore urgently needs a national biomethane strategy that firmly anchors biomethane in energy and infrastructure planning. This strategy should be embedded in an overarching federal strategy for gaseous energy carriers.

A national biomethane strategy must be the starting point for further network planning. Only once the long-term role of biomethane in the energy system has been clearly defined at political level can network operators, injection operators, off-takers and regulatory authorities make reliable investment and transformation decisions.

Biomethane must not be viewed solely from a local perspective. As a storable and transportable energy carrier, biomethane forms part of a supra-regional market and depends on interconnected gas infrastructure. Such a strategy must therefore establish the framework on the basis of which biomethane suitability areas, network connection rules and transformation pathways can subsequently be developed appropriately.

Unlike several of our European neighbours, Germany lacks a consistent political framework decision on:

- the long-term role biomethane should play in the energy system;
- the volume potential to be targeted;
- the infrastructure that must be retained and further developed; and
- how biomethane should be integrated with hydrogen, heat planning and the power plant strategy.

Biomethane is already fully recognised as a decarbonisation option under both European and national law. European instruments such as REPowerEU, the Effort Sharing Regulation and the EU Internal Gas Market Directive expressly rely on renewable and decarbonised gases. National instruments such as a green gas quota, the greenhouse gas reduction quota and the Building Modernisation Act will also increase demand for biomethane in future.

Anyone calling politically for more green gas must also ensure that this gas has long-term access to infrastructure. Biomethane must be understood as a strategic element of the transformation of the natural gas network in order to maintain a resilient energy system over the long term.

The Biomethane Taskforce therefore calls for a national biomethane strategy that:

- recognises biomethane as part of services of general interest;
- defines the role of existing gas networks in the transformation;
- systematically integrates biomethane into network, heat and power plant planning;
- places greater emphasis on security of supply and resilience; and
- enables coordinated strategic, spatial and economic planning.

The debate must no longer be conducted primarily as a decommissioning debate. Instead, policy must focus on transforming existing gas networks towards renewable gases – not only green hydrogen. The guiding principle must be:

Greening before decommissioning – because it is not the infrastructure that determines the climate impact, but the molecule transported through it.

With regard to Section 17l(7) EnWG, the development of objective, transparent and non-discriminatory criteria for disconnecting network connections must not be delegated exclusively to the Federal Network Agency. The decision as to when biomethane infrastructure may be retained, transformed or disconnected is not merely a regulatory matter of detail, but an expression of a fundamental energy and infrastructure policy choice.

The legislator must therefore derive the key criteria from a national biomethane strategy and develop them in a structured stakeholder process involving industry associations, network operators, biomethane producers, off-takers, companies, academia and civil society. The Federal Network Agency should then operationalise and apply these criteria through regulation.

2. Twenty years of investment security for biomethane

For biomethane plants, a long-term connection perspective is an essential prerequisite for investment. Biomethane projects are highly capital-intensive and typically only amortise over a period of at least 20 years. This period reduces financing risks, lowers capital costs and therefore reduces the long-term production costs of biomethane.

Without a reliable connection guarantee, neither investments in existing plants nor new projects will be secured or realised on the scale required. The protection for existing plants provided for in the Federal Government's draft is an important step, but it does not go far enough. Investment protection and the protection of legitimate expectations must apply equally to existing and new plants.

In recent years in particular, substantial investments have been made in the modernisation, expansion and efficiency improvement of existing plants. These investments were made in reliance on stable regulatory conditions and the long-term usability of the existing gas infrastructure. The Biomethane Taskforce therefore calls for legally guaranteed connection security of at least 20 years:

- for new plants, from the commissioning of the biomethane upgrading plant;
- for existing plants, from the entry into force of the new statutory rules.

A purely historical approach based on the commissioning dates of existing plants would be neither appropriate nor legally robust. It would fail to take sufficient account of subsequent investments and would create considerable legal uncertainty. A 20-year connection guarantee is not only sound from an energy policy perspective, but also economically efficient. Unlike in many other European Member States, the expansion of the biomethane sector in Germany is largely taking place without state aid and predominantly on the basis of private investment.

Precisely for this reason, the sector requires reliable and bankable conditions in order to achieve a genuine growth perspective. On the basis of investment projects already foreseeable, Germany's biomethane industry stands ready to invest between EUR 5 billion and EUR 7 billion in new plants and the expansion of existing biogas plants by 2030. These projects alone could bring at least an additional 15 TWh of biomethane into the network. However, these investments must be initiated today so that the required volumes are available in time when the green gas quota, the biomethane blending trajectory and other demand-side instruments take effect.

The future designation of biomethane suitability areas is an important planning instrument for this purpose, but it cannot replace the connection security required today. As long as these areas have not yet been defined and secured by regulation, investment decisions must not be postponed to a later planning process.

The 20-year connection security therefore forms the necessary bridge between today's investment needs and future strategic network planning. At the same time, the Biomethane Taskforce recognises that network operators require scope for transformation, for example in the case of network sections that are not economically viable or in the context of strategic conversion to hydrogen.

However, these challenges must not be addressed by weakening investment security. Instead, supplementary instruments are needed for those suitability areas in which biomethane forms part of the future network pathway according to objective criteria and where particular transformation conflicts arise.

3. Objective criteria and biomethane suitability areas for network planning

The biomethane strategy, and therefore the spatial use of biomethane and hydrogen in today's gas distribution network, must be reflected not only at an overarching strategic level, but also concretely in network planning.

The supply of biomethane must be expressly taken into account as a relevant factor when assessing future network pathways. Only in this way can it be ensured that the continued operation, conversion or decommissioning of network sections appropriately reflects the potential of renewable gases.

The Biomethane Taskforce therefore calls for overarching strategic, spatial and economic planning for biomethane and hydrogen. The objective must be to define at an early stage which network areas are suitable in the long term:

- for biomethane;
- for hydrogen; or
- for future decommissioning.

This requires a catalogue of criteria that does not focus solely on the number of directly connected gas users or local gas demand. Relevant factors should include, in particular:

- regional biomethane potential;
- existing and planned injection projects;
- network absorption capacity;
- connection and reinforcement costs;
- network topology;
- access to upstream networks and storage facilities;
- contributions to resilience and security of supply; and
- the relationship to potential hydrogen conversions or decommissioning pathways.

Biomethane suitability areas should be designated on the basis of these criteria. Special legal consequences must apply in these areas:

- privileged network connection;
- a long-term network connection perspective of at least 20 years;
- secure network-use prospects and, where appropriate, the possibility of socialising additional standby costs; and
- reliable guidance for investments in biomethane production, network connections and network infrastructure.

As long as biomethane suitability areas have not been defined on the basis of objective, regulatorily secured criteria, the absence of such designation must not be to the detriment of biomethane projects. Until such designation has taken place, the status quo applies in Germany: for the purposes of network planning, the whole of Germany is to be regarded as a suitability area for biomethane.

This can create a viable balance of interests: at least 20 years of connection security where biomethane objectively forms part of the future network pathway – without imposing a blanket obligation on network operators to continue operating uneconomic networks or separating biomethane injection operators from their customers and potentially triggering claims for damages.

Biomethane plants thus become part of a secure energy supply system, creating both planning certainty and new binding commitments. Biomethane must not be viewed solely from a regional perspective. Owing to its storability and transportability, it performs a system-supporting function for the entire energy system. In future, network infrastructure must therefore be more closely aligned with the requirements of climate-neutral gases and must not become a bottleneck in the energy transition.

4. Hardship provision and transformation mechanism for developing and safeguarding strategic biomethane infrastructure

A legally guaranteed 20-year connection security for biomethane plants remains the central prerequisite for investment in biomethane. At the same time, it must be recognised that the transformation of gas networks under European and German requirements may lead to specific conflicts in which the interests of biomethane injection operators, network operators and connected customers must be balanced.

For such clearly limited exceptional cases, a statutory hardship provision is required, with its administration assigned to the state or to an entity authorised by the state, since the state determines the applicable requirements.

We therefore recommend a transformation mechanism aimed at preserving strategically relevant biomethane infrastructure, keeping climate-neutral network sections usable and enabling transformation pathways where these are justified by overriding energy and climate policy considerations.

Such a mechanism should apply in particular where, according to objective criteria, biomethane forms part of a future network pathway, but the continued operation or retention of the infrastructure required for this purpose cannot be fully reflected on a commercial basis.

In such cases, the strategic importance of biomethane for security of supply, resilience and climate protection should be the primary consideration. The mechanism must not be understood as a blanket obligation to continue operating individual network branches. Rather, it should apply where retaining or continuing to operate a network section of strategic relevance to biomethane is justified by overriding energy and climate policy considerations but cannot be fully reflected on a commercial basis.

In such cases, network operators require appropriate compensation in order to keep strategic infrastructure available for as long as it remains sensible without creating economically inefficient parallel structures. The mechanism may serve in particular to:

- preserve strategically relevant network sections for the injection and transport of biomethane;
- preserve and, where necessary, further develop the injection, transport and network infrastructure required for biomethane in suitability areas;
- support network operators in retaining or continuing to operate infrastructure that can be used on a climate-neutral basis;
- mitigate economic hardship for network operators and biomethane injection operators;
- avoid the subsequent devaluation of investments encouraged by regulation;
- safeguard opportunities for the supra-regional use of biomethane; and
- enable transformation pathways, particularly towards biogenic hydrogen.

The application of such a mechanism must be subject to an objective, transparent and regulatorily secured assessment. The criteria derived from strategic network planning should be decisive for this purpose.

This creates a fair balance of interests: biomethane injection operators receive the necessary investment security and perspective, network operators are not unilaterally burdened with transformation costs, and customers benefit from resilient, climate-neutral gas infrastructure.

The focus is on enabling transformation and continued operation where biomethane makes sense from an energy policy, climate policy and infrastructure perspective.

The specific design – in particular funding, eligibility requirements, the responsibilities of the regulatory authority and the distinction from existing network tariff and levy mechanisms – should be clarified by the legislator without delay.

Contact

Biomethan Taskforce
c/o DIE GAS- UND WASSERSTOFFWIRTSCHAFT e.V.
Neustädtische Kirchstraße 8
10117 Berlin
mail@biomethan-taskforce.de

The Biomethane Taskforce is the central initiative for companies across the biomethane value chain. It pools expertise, market knowledge and political experience to give biomethane a strong voice in Berlin's political arena. It represents the interests of all those who produce, trade in, use or depend on biomethane – from agriculture and the circular economy to municipal utilities, industry and traders. It brings together stakeholders from the energy sector, agriculture and SMEs that seek to advance the scale-up of biomethane. The initiative is supported by the association DIE GAS- UND WASSERSTOFFWIRTSCHAFT e.V. and implemented operationally by GW Wirtschafts GmbH.