# Exploring the Determinants of Biogas Generation Potential in California

Web address for GitHub repository

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## Contents

1	Tab	le of figures	11
	1.1	Simple feature collection with 6 features and 14 fields	16
	1.2	Geometry type: MULTIPOLYGON	16
	1.3	Dimension: XY	16
	1.4	Bounding box: xmin: -122.7851 ymin: 37.45447 xmax: -119.5423 ymax: 40.15203	16
	1.5	Geodetic CRS: WGS 84	16
	1.6	ObjectID NAME STATE_NAME FIPS OWCH4t AMCH4t WWTPCH4t .	16
	1.7	1 184 Alameda California 06001 5700.695190 0.367359 10461.687700	16
	1.8	2 185 Alpine California 06003 6.483819 0.000000 6.667176	16
	1.9	3 186 Amador California 06005 156.310667 3.826180 624.136548	16
	1.10	4 187 Butte California 06007 817.909133 20.460013 1210.759120 $\dots \dots$	16
	1.11	5 188 Calaveras California 06009 97.664105 11.663426 200.148617	16
	1.12	6 189 Colusa California 06011 72.199705 2.057210 104.007942	16
	1.13	LFGCH4t TotalCH4t COUNTY LOCATION E_TOTPOP E_POV	16
	1.14	$1\ 49311\ 65473.75020$ Alameda Alameda County, California $1643700\ 170884$ .	16
	1.15	2 0 13.15099 Alpine Alpine County, California 1146 227	16
	1.16	3 0 784.27340 Amador Amador County, California 37829 3323	16
	1.17	4 0 2049.12827 Butte Butte County, California 227075 44410	16
	1.18	5 0 309.47615 Calaveras Calaveras County, California 45235 5242	16
	1.19	6 0 178.26486 Colusa Colusa County, California 21464 2929	16
		E_MINRTY geometry	16
	1.21	1 1120309 MULTIPOLYGON (((-122.313 37	16
	1.22	2 468 MULTIPOLYGON (((-120.0726 3	16
	1.23	3 8066 MULTIPOLYGON (((-121.0276 3	16
	1.24	4 62685 MULTIPOLYGON (((-122.0573 3	16
	1.25	5 8330 MULTIPOLYGON (((-120.9955 3	16
		6 13792 MULTIPOLYGON (((-122.7851 3	16
	1.27		18
	1.28	Pearson's product-moment correlation	18
	1.29		18
	1.30	data: $svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$	18
	1.31	$t = 10.655, df = 56, p-value = 4.365e-15 \dots$	18
	1.32	alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to $0 \dots \dots \dots$ .	18
	1.33	95 percent confidence interval:	18
	1.34	0.7101412 0.8887681	18
	1.35	sample estimates:	18
	1.36	cor	18
	1.37	0.818333	18
	1.38		19
		Call:	19
	1.40	$lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4t \ svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP) \ . \ . \ . \ . \ .$	19
	1.41		19
	1.42	Residuals:	19

	Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	19
1.44	-34706 -8182 -6090 -3565 76153	19
1.45		19
1.46	Coefficients:	19
1.47	Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$	19
1.48	(Intercept) $5.836e+03\ 2.956e+03\ 1.974\ 0.0533\ldots\ldots$	19
1.49	svi_sf_join\$E_TOTPOP 1.962e-02 1.841e-03 10.655 4.36e-15 ***	19
	—	19
1.51	Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 '' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' '1	19
1.52		19
1.53	Residual standard error: 20430 on 56 degrees of freedom	19
1.54	Multiple R-squared: 0.6697, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6638	19
1.55	F-statistic: 113.5 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 4.365e-15	19
1.56	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	20
1.57	Pearson's product-moment correlation	20
		20
1.59	data: $svi\_sf\_joinOWCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$	20
	$t = 82.353, df = 56, p-value < 2.2e-16 \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots$	20
	alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0	20
	95 percent confidence interval:	20
	0.9930490 0.9975794	20
	sample estimates:	20
	cor	20
	0.9958969	20
		2
	Call:	2
	$lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinOWCH4t \ svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP) \ \dots \dots$	2
		2
	Residuals:	2
	Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	2
	-1801.49 -77.14 28.39 100.93 1809.74	2
1.74		2
1.75	Coefficients:	2
	Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$	2
	(Intercept) -4.289e+01 7.117e+01 -0.603 0.549	2
	svi_sf_join\$E_TOTPOP 3.650e-03 4.432e-05 82.353 <2e-16 ***	2
	—	2
	Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 '' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' '1	2
1.81		2
_	Residual standard error: 491.8 on 56 degrees of freedom	2
	Multiple R-squared: 0.9918, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9917	2
	F-statistic: 6782 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16	2
1.85		22
	Pearson's product-moment correlation	22
1.87	1 ourson's produce moment correlation	22

1.88 data: $svi\_sf\_joinAMCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$	 22
$1.89 \text{ t} = -0.02427, \text{ df} = 56, \text{ p-value} = 0.9807 \dots \dots \dots \dots$	22
1.90 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0	22
1.91 95 percent confidence interval:	22
1.92 -0.2613200 0.2552665	22
1.93 sample estimates:	22
1.94 cor	22
1.95 -0.003243157	22
1.96	23
1.97 Call:	23
1.98 lm(formula = svi_sf_join $AMCH4t \ svi_sf_join$ E_TOTPOP)	23
1.99	23
1.100Residuals:	23
1.101Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	23
1.102-5569 -5558 -5523 -3877 76775	23
1.103	$\frac{23}{23}$
1.104Coefficients:	23 23
	23 23
1.105Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$	
1.106(Intercept) 5.569e+03 2.053e+03 2.712 0.00885 **	23
$1.107svi\_sf\_join\$E\_TOTPOP - 3.103e-05 \ 1.279e-03 - 0.024 \ 0.98072$ .	23
1.108—	23
1.109Signif. codes: 0 '' $0.001$ " $0.01$ " $0.05$ " $0.1$ ' 1	23
1.110	23
1.111Residual standard error: 14190 on 56 degrees of freedom	23
1.112Multiple R-squared: 1.052e-05, Adjusted R-squared: -0.01785	23
1.113F-statistic: 0.000589 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 0.9807	23
1.114	24
1.115Pearson's product-moment correlation	24
1.116	24
1.117data: $svi\_sf\_joinWWTPCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$	24
$1.118t = 57.684, df = 56, p-value < 2.2e-16 \dots \dots \dots \dots$	24
1.119alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to $0 \dots \dots$	24
1.12095 percent confidence interval:	 24
$1.1210.9859425 \ 0.9950932 \ \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots$	 24
$1.122 sample \ estimates: \ \dots $	 24
1.123cor	 24
1.1240.9916898	 24
1.125	 25
1.126Call:	 25
$1.127 \text{lm}(\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join}WWTPCH4t svi_s f_i oin \text{E\_TOTPOP})$	25
1.128	25
1.129Residuals:	25
1.130Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	25
1.131-6663.5 -147.9 65.7 168.0 3785.4	$\frac{-5}{25}$
1.132	$\frac{-5}{25}$

1.133Coefficients:	 	25
1.134Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$	 	25
1.135(Intercept) -1.466e+02 1.637e+02 -0.895 0.375		
1.136svi_sf_join\$E_TOTPOP 5.882e-03 1.020e-04 57.684 <2e-16 ***		25
1.137—		25
1.138Signif. codes: 0 '' <b>0.001</b> '' 0.01 '' 0.05 '' 0.1 ' '1	 	
1.139		
1.140Residual standard error: 1131 on 56 degrees of freedom		
1.141Multiple R-squared: 0.9834, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9832		$\frac{-5}{25}$
1.142F-statistic: 3327 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16		25
1.143		26
1.144Pearson's product-moment correlation		
1.145		26
1.146 $data: svi\_sf\_joinLFGCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$		
		26
1.147t = 9.6217, df = 56, p-value = $1.815e-13$		
1.148alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0		26
1.14995 percent confidence interval:		
1.1500.6670743 0.8702275		26
1.151sample estimates:		26
1.152cor		26
1.1530.7893612		
1.154		
1.155Call:		27
$1.156 \operatorname{lm}(\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join} LFGCH4t \ svi_s f_join} \text{E\_TOTPOP}) \dots$		
1.157	 	27
1.158Residuals:	 	27
1.159Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	 	27
1.160-31207 -3285 -1030 -501 46121	 	27
1.161	 	27
1.162Coefficients:	 	27
1.163Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$	 	27
1.164(Intercept) 4.564e+02 1.688e+03 0.270 0.788		27
1.165svi_sf_join\$E_TOTPOP 1.012e-02 1.052e-03 9.622 1.81e-13 ***		27
1.166—		27
1.167Signif. codes: 0 '' <b>0.001</b> '' 0.01 '' 0.05 '' 0.1 ' '1		27
1.168		27
1.169Residual standard error: 11670 on 56 degrees of freedom		27
1.170Multiple R-squared: 0.6231, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6164		27
1.171F-statistic: 92.58 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 1.815e-13		27
, <del>-</del>		28
1.172 Decrear's product moment correlation		
1.173Pearson's product-moment correlation		28
1.174		28
1.175 $data: svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV \dots \dots \dots \dots $		28
1.176t = 11.12, $df = 56$ , p-value = $8.476e-16$		28
1.177alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0	 _	28

1.17895 percent confidence interval:	28
1.1790.7271725 0.8959424	28
1.180sample estimates:	28
1.181cor	28
$1.1820.8296405  \dots  \dots  \dots  \dots  \dots  \dots  \dots  \dots  \dots  $	28
1.183	29
1.184Call:	29
$1.185 \text{lm}(\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join} Total CH4t \ svi_s f_j oin E\_POV) \ \dots \dots \dots$	29
1.186	29
1.187Residuals:	29
1.188 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	29
1.189-23578 -8007 -6799 -4377 74610	29
1.190	29
1.191Coefficients:	29
1.192 Estimate Std. Error t value $\Pr(> \mathbf{t} )$	29
1.193(Intercept) 6.684e+03 2.834e+03 2.358 0.0219 *	29
1.194svi_sf_join\$E_POV 1.310e-01 1.178e-02 11.120 8.48e-16 ***	29
1.195—	29
1.196Signif. codes: 0 '' <b>0.001</b> " 0.01" 0.05 ': 0.1" 1	29
1.197	29
1.198Residual standard error: 19840 on 56 degrees of freedom	29
1.199Multiple R-squared: 0.6883, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6827	29
1.200F-statistic: 123.7 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 8.476e-16	29
1.201	30
1.202Pearson's product-moment correlation	30
1.203	30
1.204data: svi_sf_join $LFGCH4tandsvi_sf_join$ E_POV	30
1.205t = 9.3128, df = 56, p-value = $5.653e-13$	30
1.206alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0	30
1.20795 percent confidence interval:	30
1.2080.6526255 0.8638755	30
1.209sample estimates:	30
1.210cor	30
1.2110.7795177	30
1.212	31
1.213Call:	31
$1.214 \text{lm}(\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join} LFGCH4t \ svi_s f_join} \text{E\_POV}) \dots \dots \dots \dots$	31
1.215	31
1.216Residuals:	31
1.217Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	31
1.218-24928 -3488 -1556 -1095 47103	31
1.219	31
1.220Coefficients:	31
1.221Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$	31
1.221L36Inface Std. Effort value $11(> b )$	31

1.223svi_sf_join\$E_POV 6.581e-02 7.067e-03 9.313 5.65e-13 ***	 	 	31
1.224—	 	 	31
1.225Signif. codes: 0 '' <b>0.001</b> '' 0.01 '' 0.05 '' 0.1 '' 1	 	 	31
1.226			31
1.227Residual standard error: $11900$ on $56$ degrees of freedom	 	 	31
1.228Multiple R-squared: 0.6076, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6006			31
1.229F-statistic: 86.73 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 5.653e-13			31
1.230			32
1.231Pearson's product-moment correlation			32
1.232			32
1.233data: svi_sf_join $WWTPCH4tandsvi_sf_join$ E_POV			32
1.234t = 30.671, df = 56, p-value < $2.2e-16$			32
1.235alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0			32
1.23695 percent confidence interval:			32
1.2370.9521271 0.9831025			32
1.238sample estimates:			32
1.239cor			32
1.2400.9715012			32
1.241			33
1.242Call:			33
$1.242 \text{Call.} $ $1.243 \text{lm} (\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join} WWTPCH4t } svi_s f_j oin \text{E\_POV}) .$			33
1.244			33
1.245 Residuals:			33
1.246Min 1Q Median 3Q Max			33
1.247-8111.2 -525.9 -266.3 200.7 8372.5			33
			33
1.248			აა 33
1.250Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$			33
( 1 1/			
1.251(Intercept) 2.329e+02 2.977e+02 0.782 0.437			33
1.252svi_sf_join\$E_POV 3.795e-02 1.237e-03 30.671 <2e-16 ***			33
1.253—			33
1.254Signif. codes: 0 '' <b>0.001</b> '' 0.01 '' 0.05 '' 0.1 '' 1			33
1.255			33
1.256Residual standard error: 2084 on 56 degrees of freedom			33
1.257Multiple R-squared: 0.9438, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9428			33
1.258F-statistic: 940.7 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: $< 2.2$ e-16			33
1.259			34
1.260 Pearson's product-moment correlation			34
1.261			34
1.262data: svi_sf_join $OWCH4tandsvi_sf_join$ E_POV			34
1.263t = 34.256, df = 56, p-value < $2.2e-16$			34
1.264 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0			34
1.26595 percent confidence interval:			34
1.2660.9612260 0.9863552			34
1.267sample estimates:		 	34

1.268cor	 	 	34
1.2690.9769612	 	 	34
1.270	 	 	35
1.271Call:			35
$1.272 \text{lm}(\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join}OWCH4t \ svi_s f_j oin \text{E\_POV})$	 	 	35
1.273			35
1.274Residuals:			35
1.275Min 1Q Median 3Q Max			35
1.276-2379.5 -363.1 -195.7 96.0 4351.1			35
1.277			35
1.278Coefficients:			35
1.279Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$			35
1.280(Intercept) $1.895e+02$ $1.656e+02$ $1.144$ $0.257$			35
1.281svi_sf_join\$E_POV 2.359e-02 6.885e-04 34.256 <2e-16 ***			35
1.282—			35
1.283Signif. codes: 0 ' ' 0.001 '' 0.01 '' 0.05 ': 0.1 ' ' 1			35
1.284			35
1.285Residual standard error: 1160 on 56 degrees of freedom			35
1.286Multiple R-squared: 0.9545, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9536			35
1.287F-statistic: 1174 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: $< 2.2e-16 \dots$			35
1.288			36
1.289Pearson's product-moment correlation			36
1.290			36
1.291data: $svi\_sf\_joinAMCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV$			36
1.292t = 0.43506, df = 56, p-value = $0.6652$			36
$1.293 \mathrm{alternative}$ hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to $0$			36
1.29495 percent confidence interval:			36
$1.295 - 0.2033043 \ 0.3116628 \ \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots$	 	 	36
1.296sample estimates:	 	 	36
1.297cor	 	 	36
1.2980.05803922	 	 	36
1.299	 	 	37
1.300Call:	 	 	37
$1.301 \text{lm}(\text{formula} = \text{svi\_sf\_join} AMCH4t \ svi_s f_j oin E\_POV)$	 	 	37
1.302	 	 	37
1.303Residuals:	 	 	37
1.304Min 1Q Median 3Q Max	 	 	37
1.305-10228 -5295 -5206 -3608 76704			37
1.306			37
1.307Coefficients:			37
1.308Estimate Std. Error t value $Pr(> t )$			37
1.309(Intercept) 5.202e+03 2.023e+03 2.572 0.0128 *		 	37
1.310svi_sf_join\$E_POV 3.658e-03 8.408e-03 0.435 0.6652			37
1.31—			37
1.312Signif. codes: 0 ' <b>0.001</b> " 0.01 " 0.05 " 0.1 ' ' 1			37

	1.313	37
	1.314Residual standard error: 14160 on 56 degrees of freedom	37
	1.315Multiple R-squared: 0.003369, Adjusted R-squared: -0.01443	37
	1.316F-statistic: 0.1893 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 0.6652	37
2	Conclusion	43
3	References	<b>4</b> 4

### List of Tables

### 1 Table of figures

Figure 1: Population density across counties im California

Figure 2: Impoverished population density across counties in California

Figure 3: Total Methane potential across counties in California

Figure 4: Waste water Methane Potential across counties in California

Figure 5: Landfill methane potential across counties in California

Figure 6: Organic Waste methane potential across counties in California

Figure 7: Animal manure methane potential across counties in California

Figure 8: Total Methane Generation Potential

Figure 9:

Figure 10:

Figure 11:

Figure 12:

Figure 13:

Figure 14:

#### \newpage

#### # Background

#### ## Rationale of the study

The transition to cleaner and renewable sources of energy requires more work to scale already existing gains, for example in the area of biogas utilization, while also seeking out new opportunities. Biogas is a form of renewable energy produced by anaerobic decomposition or thermochemical conversion of biomass such as agricultural waste, manure, municipal waste sewage, green waste and food waste. Biogas is composed mostly of methane, alongside carbon dioxide, water vapor and other gases. Similar to natural gas, biogas can be burned directly as a fuel or treated to remove the CO2 and other gases before for being used in the form of biomethane.

Utilizing biogas as an energy source helps to transform harmful gases from decomposing waste into positive use. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere, with a global warming potential estimated to be over 25 times as potent as that of Carbon Dioxide. Transforming waste into biogas therefore reduces greenhouse gas emissions and the risk of pollution to waterways. The [UNECE] (https://unece.org/challenge#:~:text=Methane%20is%20a%20powerful%20greenhouses,gr estimates that over a 20 year period, this ratio increases to 84-86 times. However, stored biogas limits the amount of methane released into the atmosphere and reduces dependence on fossil fuels. When stored , biogas serves as a renewable and reliable baseload power source and can even be used to rapidly meet peak power demands. When biogas is used for energy generation in place of fossil fuels, it enables even more emission reductions, sometimes resulting in carbon negative systems. According to the [Environmental and Energy Study Institute, EESI](https://www.eesi.org/papers/view/fact-sheet-biogasconverting-waste-to-energy) ,the reduction of methane emissions derived from tapping all the potential biogas in the United States would be equal to the annual emissions of 800,000 to 11 million passenger vehicles.

Unfortunately, despite the various benefits offered by biogas energy, the United States currently only has 2,200 operating biogas systems. The EESI estimates this current capacity to be less than 20% of the total potential. It is on this basis that this study attempts to examine the factors contributing to biogas generation potential, particularly in

California. California was selected because of its status as a leading state in biogas generation potential based on estimates by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). According to the [American Biogas Council](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A California can power nearly 200,000 homes if this biogas is utilized appropriately. The results of our analysis for California can provide the basis for further analysis across several other US states.

#### ## Research Questions

The analysis conducted was done based on two research questions:

- 1. Is biogas generation potential correlated with population density across California counties?
- 2. What additional factors must be considered in determining biogas generation potential?

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#### # Dataset Information

the datasets used include the following:

- Methane Generation Potential The NREL's dataset on methane generation potential covers data for the entire United States of America. It particularly providing information for Methane generation potential across all states in metric tons from sources which include landfills, industrial organic waste, animal manure, and wastewater. All of these individual sources were aggregated to estimate total methane generation potential by state. The dataset contained estimates for 2009 to 2012, being the latest available data we could find online.
- 2. Population data Population data was pulled from the latest available the Social Vulnerability Index data compiled by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substance and Diseace Reegistry (ATSDR). This dataset also includes details on impoverished populations and spans from 2017-2018. Since the SDI offers data that helps to effectly plan towards meeting the needs of improverished populations, this dataset also helps to dds another dimension to our analysis as it enables the exploration of impacts on socially vulnerable people.

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### # Exploratory Analysis

The two datasets were wrangled and joined both datasets to have a unified dataframe that captured data on methane generation potential, population and poverty levels by county. An initial exploration of the data was done to provide a visual assessment of spatial data and determine the emergence of any any trends.

- 1.1 Simple feature collection with 6 features and 14 fields
- 1.2 Geometry type: MULTIPOLYGON
- 1.3 Dimension: XY
- 1.4 Bounding box: xmin: -122.7851 ymin: 37.45447 xmax: -119.5423 ymax: 40.15203
- 1.5 Geodetic CRS: WGS 84
- 1.6 ObjectID NAME STATE\_NAME FIPS OWCH4t AMCH4t WWTPCH4t
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- 1.18 5 0 309.47615 Calaveras Calaveras County, California 45235 5242
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- 1.20 E MINRTY geometry
- 1.21 1 1120309 MULTIPOLYGON (((-122.313 37...
- 1.22 2 468 MULTIPOLYGON (((-120.0726 3...
- 1.23 3 8066 MULTIPOLYGON (((-121.0276 3...

shaded yellow, Los Angeles, has the highest methane (CH4) generation potential. The density of impoverished population appears to be similarly distributed.

![](FDR\_Final\_files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-3-1.pdf)<!-- -->

The total Methane generation potential is greatest at the most densely populated areas. This trend appears to continue with wastewater derived methane.

![](FDR\_Final\_files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-4-1.pdf)<!-- -->

Industrial Organic waste, like wastewater, is highly correlated with population. With landfill-based methane, some counties in central CA, which do not appear to have a high population, have comparatively high methane generation potential. There may be some non-population related factors in play.

![](FDR\_Final\_files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-5-1.pdf)<!-- -->

The trend with animal-manure derived CH4 however substantially differs from the previous cases. Population does not appear to be a decisive factor.

![](FDR Final files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-6-1.pdf)<!-- -->

\newpage

# Analysis

## Question 1: What factors affect biogas generation potential in different counties of

- 1.27
- 1.28 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.29
- 1.30 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$
- 1.31 t = 10.655, df = 56, p-value = 4.365e-15
- 1.32 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.33 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.34\quad 0.7101412\ 0.8887681$
- 1.35 sample estimates:
- 1.36 cor
- $1.37 \quad 0.818333$

- 1.38
- 1.39 Call:
- 1.40  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP)$
- 1.41
- 1.42 Residuals:
- 1.43 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.44 -34706 -8182 -6090 -3565 76153
- 1.45
- 1.46 Coefficients:
- 1.47 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.48 (Intercept) 5.836e+03 2.956e+03 1.974 0.0533.
- 1.50 —
- 1.51 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 '' 0.01 '' 0.05 '' 0.1 '' 1
- 1.52
- 1.53 Residual standard error: 20430 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.54 Multiple R-squared: 0.6697, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6638
- 1.55 F-statistic: 113.5 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 4.365e-15
- ![](FDR\_Final\_files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-7-1.pdf)<!-- --> ![](FDR\_Final\_files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-7-1.pdf)

- 1.56
- 1.57 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.58
- 1.59 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinOWCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$
- 1.60 t = 82.353, df = 56, p-value < 2.2e-16
- 1.61 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.62 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.63\quad 0.9930490\ 0.9975794$
- 1.64 sample estimates:
- 1.65 cor
- $1.66 \quad 0.9958969$

- 1.67
- 1.68 Call:
- 1.69  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinOWCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP)$
- 1.70
- 1.71 Residuals:
- 1.72 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.73 -1801.49 -77.14 28.39 100.93 1809.74
- 1.74
- 1.75 Coefficients:
- 1.76 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.77 (Intercept) -4.289e+01 7.117e+01 -0.603 0.549
- 1.79 —
- 1.80 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 '' 0.01 '' 0.05 '' 0.1 '' 1
- 1.81
- 1.82 Residual standard error: 491.8 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.83 Multiple R-squared: 0.9918, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9917
- 1.84 F-statistic: 6782 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

- 1.85
- 1.86 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.87
- 1.88 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinAMCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$
- 1.89 t = -0.02427, df = 56, p-value = 0.9807
- 1.90 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.91 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.92 \quad -0.2613200 \ 0.2552665$
- 1.93 sample estimates:
- 1.94 cor
- 1.95 -0.003243157

- 1.96
- 1.97 Call:
- 1.98  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinAMCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP)$
- 1.99
- 1.100 Residuals:
- 1.101 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.102 -5569 -5558 -5523 -3877 76775
- 1.103
- 1.104 Coefficients:
- 1.105 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.106 (Intercept) 5.569e+03 2.053e+03 2.712 0.00885 \*\*
- 1.107 svi\_sf\_join\$E\_TOTPOP -3.103e-05 1.279e-03 -0.024 0.98072
- 1.108 —
- 1.109 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 '' 1
- 1.110
- 1.111 Residual standard error: 14190 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.112 Multiple R-squared: 1.052e-05, Adjusted R-squared: -0.01785
- 1.113 F-statistic: 0.000589 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 0.9807

- 1.114
- 1.115 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.116
- 1.117 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinWWTPCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$
- 1.118 t = 57.684, df = 56, p-value < 2.2e-16
- 1.119 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.120 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.121\quad 0.9859425\ 0.9950932$
- 1.122 sample estimates:
- 1.123 cor
- $1.124 \quad 0.9916898$

- 1.125
- 1.126 Call:
- 1.127  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinWWTPCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP)$
- 1.128
- 1.129 Residuals:
- 1.130 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.131 -6663.5 -147.9 65.7 168.0 3785.4
- 1.132
- 1.133 Coefficients:
- 1.134 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.135 (Intercept) -1.466e+02 1.637e+02 -0.895 0.375
- 1.137 —
- 1.138 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' ' 1
- 1.139
- 1.140 Residual standard error: 1131 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.141 Multiple R-squared: 0.9834, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9832
- 1.142 F-statistic: 3327 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

- 1.143
- 1.144 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.145
- 1.146 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinLFGCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP$
- 1.147 t = 9.6217, df = 56, p-value = 1.815e-13
- 1.148 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.149 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.150\quad 0.6670743\ 0.8702275$
- 1.151 sample estimates:
- 1.152 cor
- $1.153 \quad 0.7893612$

- 1.154
- 1.155 Call:
- 1.156  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinLFGCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_TOTPOP)$
- 1.157
- 1.158 Residuals:
- 1.159 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.160 -31207 -3285 -1030 -501 46121
- 1.161
- 1.162 Coefficients:
- 1.163 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.164 (Intercept) 4.564e+02 1.688e+03 0.270 0.788
- 1.166 —
- 1.167 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 '' 1
- 1.168
- 1.169 Residual standard error: 11670 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.170 Multiple R-squared: 0.6231, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6164
- 1.171 F-statistic: 92.58 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 1.815e-13
- ![](FDR\_Final\_files/figure-latex/unnamed-chunk-7-6.pdf)<!-- -->

- 1.172
- 1.173 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.174
- 1.175 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV$
- 1.176 t = 11.12, df = 56, p-value = 8.476e-16
- 1.177 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.178 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.179 \quad 0.7271725 \ 0.8959424$
- 1.180 sample estimates:
- 1.181 cor
- $1.182 \quad 0.8296405$

- 1.183
- 1.184 Call:
- 1.185  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinTotalCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_POV)$
- 1.186
- 1.187 Residuals:
- 1.188 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.189 -23578 -8007 -6799 -4377 74610
- 1.190
- 1.191 Coefficients:
- 1.192 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.193 (Intercept) 6.684e+03 2.834e+03 2.358 0.0219 \*
- 1.195 —
- 1.196 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 ". 0.1 ' ' 1
- 1.197
- 1.198 Residual standard error: 19840 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.199 Multiple R-squared: 0.6883, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6827
- 1.200 F-statistic: 123.7 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 8.476e-16

- 1.201
- 1.202 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.203
- 1.204 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinLFGCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV$
- 1.205 t = 9.3128, df = 56, p-value = 5.653e-13
- 1.206 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.207 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.208 \quad 0.6526255 \ 0.8638755$
- 1.209 sample estimates:
- 1.210 cor
- $1.211 \quad 0.7795177$

- 1.212
- 1.213 Call:
- 1.214  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinLFGCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_POV)$
- 1.215
- 1.216 Residuals:
- 1.217 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.218 -24928 -3488 -1556 -1095 47103
- 1.219
- 1.220 Coefficients:
- 1.221 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.222 (Intercept) 1.059e+03 1.700e+03 0.623 0.536
- 1.223 svi\_sf\_join \$E\_POV 6.581e-02 7.067e-03 9.313 5.65e-13 \*\*\*
- 1.224 —
- 1.225 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' ' 1
- 1.226
- 1.227 Residual standard error: 11900 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.228 Multiple R-squared: 0.6076, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6006
- 1.229 F-statistic: 86.73 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 5.653e-13

- 1.230
- 1.231 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.232
- 1.233 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinWWTPCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV$
- 1.234 t = 30.671, df = 56, p-value < 2.2e-16
- 1.235 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.236 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.237\quad 0.9521271\ 0.9831025$
- 1.238 sample estimates:
- 1.239 cor
- $1.240 \quad 0.9715012$

- 1.241
- 1.242 Call:
- 1.243  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinWWTPCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_POV)$
- 1.244
- 1.245 Residuals:
- 1.246 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- $1.247 8111.2 525.9 266.3 \ 200.7 \ 8372.5$
- 1.248
- 1.249 Coefficients:
- 1.250 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.251 (Intercept) 2.329e+02 2.977e+02 0.782 0.437
- 1.252 svi\_sf\_join \$E\_POV 3.795e-02 1.237e-03 30.671 <2e-16 \*\*\*
- 1.253 —
- 1.254 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' ' 1
- 1.255
- 1.256 Residual standard error: 2084 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.257 Multiple R-squared: 0.9438, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9428
- 1.258 F-statistic: 940.7 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value:  $\langle$  2.2e-16

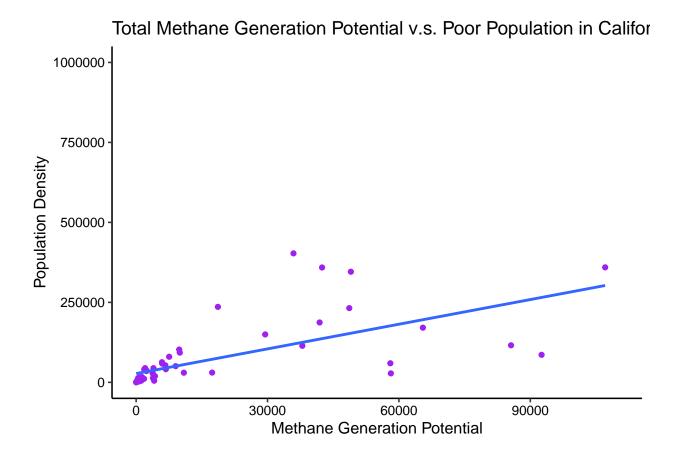
- 1.259
- 1.260 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.261
- 1.262 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinOWCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV$
- 1.263 t = 34.256, df = 56, p-value < 2.2e-16
- 1.264 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.265 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.266\quad 0.9612260\ 0.9863552$
- 1.267 sample estimates:
- 1.268 cor
- $1.269 \quad 0.9769612$

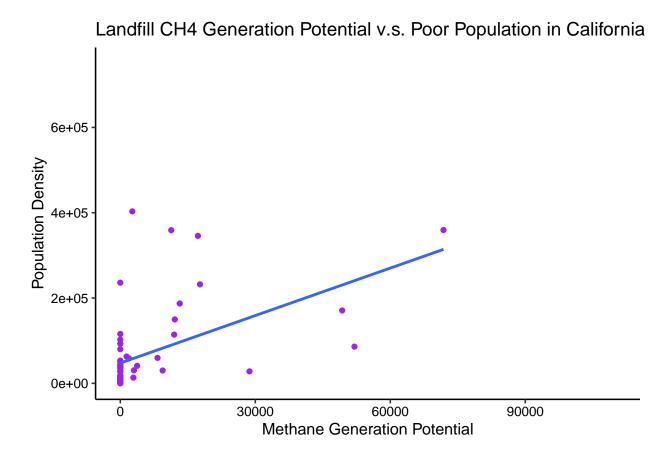
- 1.270
- 1.271 Call:
- 1.272  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinOWCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_POV)$
- 1.273
- 1.274 Residuals:
- 1.275 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- $1.276 \quad -2379.5 \quad -363.1 \quad -195.7 \quad 96.0 \quad 4351.1$
- 1.277
- 1.278 Coefficients:
- 1.279 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.280 (Intercept) 1.895e+02 1.656e+02 1.144 0.257
- 1.281 svi\_sf\_join \$E\_POV 2.359e-02 6.885e-04 34.256 <2e-16 \*\*\*
- 1.282 —
- 1.283 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' ' 1
- 1.284
- 1.285 Residual standard error: 1160 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.286 Multiple R-squared: 0.9545, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9536
- 1.287 F-statistic: 1174 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

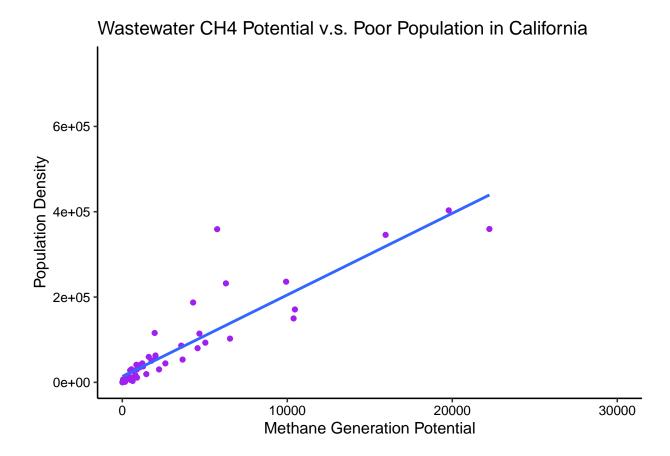
- 1.288
- 1.289 Pearson's product-moment correlation
- 1.290
- 1.291 data:  $svi\_sf\_joinAMCH4tandsvi_sf_joinE\_POV$
- 1.292 t = 0.43506, df = 56, p-value = 0.6652
- 1.293 alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
- 1.294 95 percent confidence interval:
- $1.295 \quad -0.2033043 \ 0.3116628$
- 1.296 sample estimates:
- 1.297 cor
- $1.298 \quad 0.05803922$

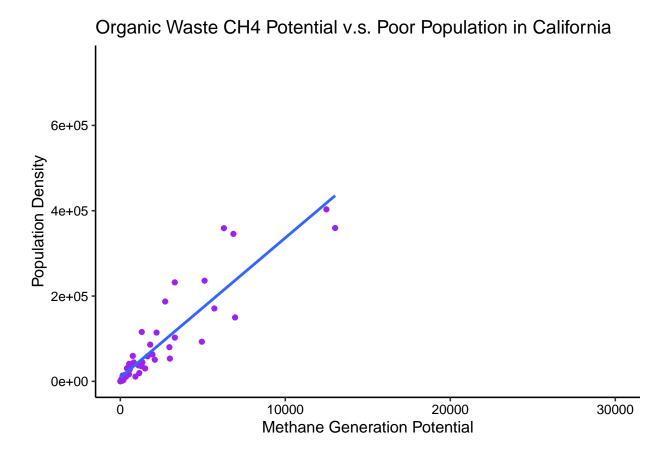
- 1.299
- 1.300 Call:
- 1.301  $lm(formula = svi\_sf\_joinAMCH4t svi_sf_joinE\_POV)$
- 1.302
- 1.303 Residuals:
- 1.304 Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
- 1.305 -10228 -5295 -5206 -3608 76704
- 1.306
- 1.307 Coefficients:
- 1.308 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
- 1.309 (Intercept) 5.202e+03 2.023e+03 2.572 0.0128 \*
- $1.310 \quad svi\_sf\_join\$E\_POV \; 3.658e\text{-}03 \; 8.408e\text{-}03 \; 0.435 \; 0.6652$
- 1.311 —
- 1.312 Signif. codes: 0 '' 0.001 "' 0.01 " 0.05 '' 0.1 ' ' 1
- 1.313
- 1.314 Residual standard error: 14160 on 56 degrees of freedom
- 1.315 Multiple R-squared: 0.003369, Adjusted R-squared: -0.01443
- 1.316 F-statistic: 0.1893 on 1 and 56 DF, p-value: 0.6652

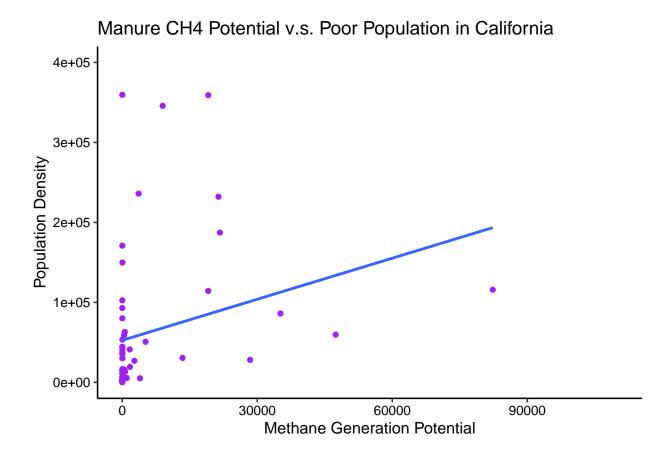
"











### 2 Conclusion

The null hypothesis to our research question is that there is no correlation between population density and biogas generation potential. We ran a correlation test to test the strength and direction between California population and the total biogas generation potential. We also ran a simple linear regression model to investigate whether these two variables involves a linear relationship. By looking at the residual plots, we can tell that the regression model fits our data but has outliers that disrupt the model accuracy. The p-value is 4.22e-15, indicating that the result is statistically significant. The multiple R-squared is 0.67, meaning that the independent variables can expalin 67% of the variations in biogas generation potential. Therefore, we are confident in rejecting the null hypothesis. Now we can say the total biogas generation potential in california does have a linear relationship with the population density. However, we still want to know how and what different sources is correlated with population. Subsequently, we ran the same test for each individual biogas sources. Based on the results from running correlation test and linear regression model for each of the biogas generation sources: Organic waste, Animal manure, Wastewater, and Landfill. We found out the the organic waste and wastewater contributes to the highest correlation to the population density, while Animal manure and landfill are less correlated.

Overall, the analysis conducted show that biogas generation potential across counties in California is positively correlated with the population density. This implies that the higher the population in a specific area, the higher the biogas generation potential. However, the analysis also recognises that generation potential and correlation with population density varies according to the biomass source across counties. As such, results show that animal based methane appeared to be less correlated with population. Assumptions that best explain this result are that more animals will contribute to animal-based biomass and that human habitation is often less where animal population is dense. Results of our analysis also show that the potential of landfill-based biogas was not limited to densely or sparsely populated areas, while organic waste and waste water represented the most significant sources of biogas generation potential across California.

Future analysis can focus on improving the model presented in this report by eliminating some outliers and using more recent datasets. This study made use of older data sets because those were the ones most recently made available on open and credible data portals. Other areas of future analysis include exploring the level and process of utilization of California's biogas generation potential, as well as how utilization can be scaled. For example, the potential of leveraging the biogas generation potential by enabling counties with lower generation potentials to tap into the resources for those with higher generation. This also includes scoping the potential to utilize biogas energy for base load power or peaking, using various analyses including a cost-benefit analysis.

## 3 References

< add references here if relevant, otherwise delete this section>