



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Joins Coalition of 16 Attorneys General in Opposing Rollback of Air Quality Standards
Attorneys General Urge Congress to Block Legislation That Would Delay Ozone Standards and Undermine the Clean Air Act – Marking a Major Step Backwards in Combatting Pollution and its Public Health Impacts; Ozone Standards Would Prevent Up to 660 Premature Deaths; 230,000 Asthma Attacks in Children

BALTIMORE, MD (April 26, 2017) - Today, Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh joined a coalition of 16 Attorneys General in urging Congress to reject the rollback of critical protective ozone air quality standards.

In letters to the chairmen and ranking members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the coalition detailed its opposition to S. 263 / H.R. 806, the Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2017, which would substantially delay the ozone standards promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2015 – marking a major step backwards in efforts to combat pollution and its negative impact on public health.

[Click here to read the letters.](#)

People exposed to elevated levels of ozone suffer from lung tissue damage, as well as aggravation of asthma, bronchitis, heart disease, and emphysema; children and seniors are particularly susceptible to ozone's harmful health effects. The 2015 ozone rule is expected to result in vital public health benefits. In fact, the EPA conservatively estimated that meeting the new standards would result in annual public health benefits of up to \$4.5 billion starting in 2025 (not including California), while also preventing approximately:

- 316 to 660 premature deaths;
- 230,000 asthma attacks in children;
- 160,000 missed school days;
- 28,000 missed work days;
- 630 asthma-related emergency room visits; and
- 340 cases of acute bronchitis in children.

“This bill would not only delay implementation of more protective ozone air quality standards, but, more broadly, would undermine the mandate in the Clean Air Act (Act) that the national ambient air quality standards for ozone and other criteria pollutants be based on up-to-date scientific evidence and focus *solely* on protecting public health and welfare,” the Attorneys General wrote. “As explained below, these measures would be a significant step backward in combatting the dangers of ozone and other criteria pollutants.”

“In summary, ozone pollution remains a serious and persistent problem for our nation, posing a particular risk to the health of children, the elderly and the sick, as well as individuals who spend time outdoors. Because S. 263 would represent a significant step backward in combatting ozone and other dangerous criteria pollutants, we urge you to oppose the bill,” the Attorneys General concluded in their letter to the Senate.

In addition to Maryland, the letters were signed by the Attorneys General of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia, as well as the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.