



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Joins Coalition of Attorneys General in Filing Intervention in Suit Against EPA to Secure Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

BALTIMORE, MD (June 20, 2017) – Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today joined a coalition of 14 attorneys general and the City of Chicago in filing a [motion](#) in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to intervene in a lawsuit against U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt’s actions to halt regulation of leaks of greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollutants from new sources in the oil and gas industry.

The motion to intervene in the case — *Clean Air Council v. Pruitt* — is in support of a group of environmental organizations seeking to immediately stop the EPA’s unlawful administrative stay of a rule, finalized in 2016 (the 2016 Rule), that would prevent emissions of thousands of tons of the potent greenhouse gas methane, smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and hazardous air pollutants including benzene and formaldehyde from facilities constructed after September 2015. Administrator Pruitt announced in April 2017 that the EPA would halt the 2016 Rule, and on June 5 implemented a 90-day administrative stay of the Rule’s key leak detection and repair requirements, along with an order to reconsider aspects of the 2016 Rule, which has been in place for nearly one year.

In addition to Maryland, the motion to intervene includes attorneys general of Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and the City of Chicago.

The 2016 Rule requires oil and gas companies to monitor sources of emissions at well sites and compressor stations constructed after September 2015 in order to detect air pollutant leaks and repair them at regular intervals. According to testimony filed by scientific experts in the case, during the 90-day term of the administrative stay alone, more than 5,300 tons of methane, 1,475 tons of VOCs, and 56 tons of hazardous air pollutants will be emitted that would otherwise have been prevented had the EPA not put the brakes on the 2016 Rule.

Administrator Pruitt and the EPA have signaled that they will seek to further stay the 2016 Rule for an additional 27 months. If those further stays are implemented, experts predict at least 48,000 additional tons of methane, 13,000 tons of VOCs, and over 500 tons of hazardous air pollutants will be emitted that would have otherwise been prevented by the Rule.

Methane is a particularly powerful agent of climate change; pound-for-pound, methane warms the climate about 34 times more than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period, and in a 20-year timeframe, has about 86 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide. According to the EPA, the oil and gas sector is the largest emitter of methane in the U.S., accounting for a third of total U.S. methane emissions.