



## PRESS RELEASE

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**Attorney General Frosh Joins 13 States Calling on Congress to  
Reject “Deep and Damaging” EPA Cuts,  
Anti-Environment Budget Riders  
*House and Senate Would Eliminate Over \$150 Million in Critical Funds, Slash  
EPA Staff by Over One-Quarter;  
Proposed Budgets Cut Vital Programs Including Enforcement, Scientific  
Research, and Environmental Justice***

**BALTIMORE, MD (December 21, 2017)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today joined a coalition of 13 states in calling on the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to reject “deep and damaging” cuts in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and anti-environmental riders in federal budget bills. In a [letter](#) to Congressional leadership, the coalition charges that the EPA cuts and riders currently proposed by both houses “will lead to more pollution of our air, water, and communities, and an accompanying increase in damage to public health.” The coalition is urging Congress to pass a final budget that fully funds EPA and omits any anti-environmental riders.

“As forest fires rage on the West Coast, communities struggle to recover from multiple hurricanes, and States work to reduce pollution in our air and water, we should be discussing how to increase and not slash the budget of the agency charged with protecting our environment,” said Attorney General Frosh.

Congress is reported to be negotiating with the Trump Administration on a final fiscal year 2018 budget for the EPA based on the House-passed Interior, Environmental, and Related Agencies FY 2018 appropriations bill (H.R. 3354) and the Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman’s Mark for FY 2018 appropriations for these agencies. While not as draconian as the \$2.4 billion in EPA cuts originally proposed by the Trump Administration, the House-passed budget bill would still cut the EPA’s budget by \$650 million; the Senate bill would cut the EPA’s budget by \$150 million. These budget cuts would leave EPA with its smallest budget since 1986, adjusting for inflation, and would especially devastate the EPA’s core programs – even more so than the Trump Administration’s original proposal.

The bulk of the proposed cuts fall on central activities of EPA – environmental enforcement and compliance assurance, setting environmental standards, issuing permits, monitoring emissions, and providing technical and legal assistance to enforcement, compliance, and oversight. The House reduces funding for EPA’s core programs by 24 percent – an even deeper cut for these programs than proposed in the Trump Administration’s irresponsible budget – while the Senate

shrinks this funding by 10 percent. The House and Senate budgets would likely cut EPA's workforce by over one-quarter.

As the Trump Administration continues to retreat from enforcing federal environmental laws, the Senate and House are proposing cuts in the EPA's enforcement budget of 10 percent and 15 percent, respectively. In addition, both the Senate and House follow the Trump Administration's lead targeting EPA programs that protect the health of disadvantaged communities, proposing a 10 percent and 15 percent cut, respectively, in funding for the EPA Office of Environmental Justice. Further, the House-passed budget attacks funding critical for protecting the health of some of our nation's most important waterbodies.

The coalition's letter highlights concerns about the Senate's proposal to eliminate EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) program, which, among other things, plays a fundamental role in the setting of national drinking water standards. The coalition letter notes that drinking water supplies across the country are now contaminated with the toxic industrial chemicals perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). PFOA and PFOS are currently unregulated under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, with no national monitoring or enforcement mechanism in place to address their risk to the public. The coalition letter states, "the elimination or reduction of the IRIS program will likely delay, if not end, progress toward effective, science-based regulation of these dangerous chemicals, and toward ensuring the health and safety of the water Americans drink".

The letter also flags several troubling policy riders added to the EPA funding bills, including those that would:

- Create a dangerous precedent by allowing EPA to bypass federal law and allow the Trump Administration to shut the public out of its planned repeal and replacement of the "Waters of the United States" rule – regulations that define which waters will receive protection under the federal Clean Water Act.
- Delay the implementation of health-based standards for smog pollution for 10 years – even though 115 million Americans currently breathe air with harmful levels of smog.
- Block common-sense regulations for controlling emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane from the oil and natural gas industry. Controlling methane – which saves the industry money from the recovery of valuable natural gas – also reduces emissions of smog-forming pollutants, and hazardous air pollutants, including benzene and formaldehyde.

Finally, the coalition letter notes that there is a strong argument that more – not less – funding for EPA is needed. For example, it is clear that funding that the EPA provides to states and municipalities has not been sufficient for them to keep pace with the burgeoning challenge of providing safe drinking water and properly treating wastewater.

In addition to Maryland, the letter was also signed by Attorneys General of California, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, and the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.