



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Joins Coalition Opposing EPA Proposal to Gut Standards for Super Pollutant Methane and Ozone-Causing Emissions

BALTIMORE, MD (November 22, 2019) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh, joining a coalition of attorneys general and the City of Chicago, today filed [comments](#) opposing an unlawful proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which would gut the current standards that limit emissions of methane and other harmful pollutants from new, reconstructed, and modified facilities in the oil and natural gas industry. This sector is the largest industrial source of methane emissions, a greenhouse gas up to 84-times more potent than carbon dioxide in its ability to trap heat.

“Gutting a common-sense rule that protects the health of our environment and of our citizens is contrary to the mission and purpose of the EPA,” said Attorney General Frosh. “EPA and the Trump Administration have again ignored clear evidence of harm to our natural resources and our communities while siding with corporate polluters.”

The proposed rule would increase emissions of hazardous air pollutants, methane, and volatile organic compounds (VOC), accelerating the impacts of climate change. VOC emissions contribute to the formation of ozone, which poses a significant threat to public health, particularly to children, older adults, and those suffering from chronic lung disease and asthma. The weakened standards would undermine a common-sense rule that reduces harmful pollutants and recovers valuable natural gas that would otherwise be lost. The current standard, which was set in 2016, is estimated to prevent 300,000 tons of methane emissions in 2020 and 510,000 tons in 2025. In 2016, the EPA analyzed the costs and benefits of the current standard, including the revenues generated from recovered natural gas that would otherwise be vented, and determined that the standard would result in a net benefit estimated at \$35 million in 2020 and \$170 million in 2025.

The coalition argues in the letter the proposed rule is unlawful because EPA:

- Disregards its own previous conclusions about the substantial adverse impacts of methane emissions from the oil and natural gas industry, the largest domestic source of climate-warming methane;
- Fails to justify its decision to abandon the regulation of methane; and,
- Arbitrarily eliminates pollution controls from the transmission and storage segment of the oil and natural gas sector, in direct contravention of EPA’s prior factual and legal findings.

In addition to Maryland, the letter was signed by the states of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, the Commonwealths of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and the City of Chicago, the City and County of Denver, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.