



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Joins Motion to Demand EPA Exercise Legal Responsibility to Control Methane Pollution *EPA Disregards Its Obligation to Curb Methane Emissions from Existing Oil and Gas Operations, Endangering Health and Safety of Communities*

BALTIMORE, MD (July 6, 2020) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh joined a coalition of 15 attorneys general and the City of Chicago in filing a [motion](#) to demand the Trump administration stop ignoring its legal responsibility to control emissions of methane from existing oil and gas operations. The action is a part of a lawsuit brought in April 2018 against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for violating the federal Clean Air Act by “unreasonably delaying” for four years its mandatory obligation under the Act to control methane emissions from existing oil and gas operations.

The coalition’s motion asks the Court to grant summary judgment in favor of Plaintiffs, declare EPA’s four-year delay unreasonable, and order EPA to develop and expeditiously issue a rule to control methane emissions from existing sources.

“Under the Trump administration, the EPA continues to ignore its responsibility to control pollution that risks public health and speeds up climate change already occurring at an alarming rate,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Now we must ask the Court to force the EPA to do its job to control these harmful emissions.”

Methane is an extremely potent greenhouse gas, warming the climate about 80 times more than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeframe. Oil and gas operations—production, processing, transmission, and distribution—are the largest single industrial source of methane emissions in the United States, and the second largest industrial source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions behind only electric power plants. About 850,000 existing oil and gas sources account for the majority of emissions from that sector. Based on EPA data, the Environmental Defense Fund estimates that roughly \$1.5 billion worth of natural gas—enough to heat over 5 million homes—leaks or is intentionally released from the oil and gas supply chain each year. The logic of continuing to allow leaks and intentional discharges of methane is especially dubious, as methane itself is a valuable product, being the primary component of natural gas.

Since at least 2016, the Clean Air Act has required EPA to regulate methane from existing sources in oil and gas operations. Recognizing its statutory duty, and the urgency of reducing dangerous emissions, EPA set a course in 2016 to “swiftly” develop regulations for methane emissions from these sources. Had the agency stayed on course, it would have already issued

existing source methane regulations. Instead, in early 2017, then-EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt abruptly pulled the plug on the process, effectively terminating all agency work to promulgate a regulation. The coalition argues that Pruitt stopped the process without any consideration of the law or facts, and with no public input, putting our communities and climate at risk.

Joining Attorney General Frosh in today's motion for summary judgment are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and the City of Chicago.