



March 30, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES CONGRESS TO REJECT PROPOSALS GUTTING THE U.S. EPA

Proposed Federal Funding Cuts Could Cost Illinois EPA \$29 million in Program Support and 80 Staff Members

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today joined 12 other attorneys general strongly opposing the proposed federal budget cuts to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its critical programs that could dramatically impact the state's Environmental Protection Agency.

In a letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Madigan and the attorneys general point to the President's recent proposal to cut 31 percent from the EPA's budget, which is the biggest cut of any federal agency in the White House 2018 budget, as well as a bill introduced by Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz that would eliminate the EPA entirely on December 31, 2018.

"Decimating the EPA's budget is an appalling mistake that will dramatically impact Illinois' environment and our communities," Madigan said. "I am committed to fighting any proposals to lessen the EPA's critical mission. These budget cuts will cause irreparable harm to our environment and health."

Under the proposed budget cuts, the Illinois EPA could lose \$29 million in federal funding for program support and funding for 80 staff members.

In part, the letter states:

"Any bill or budgetary item that would eliminate or seriously reduce the funding of the Environmental Protection Agency would critically damage the ability of our respected states to protect its citizens from violations of federal and state environmental laws. In the almost fifty years since the EPA was established, our nation's air, water and other natural resources have become much cleaner, and the health and quality of life for millions of Americans has greatly improved. Reducing the EPA and states' ability to enforce the nation's environmental laws would bring us back to the dark days of environmental regulation, with rampant air pollution, regular fish kills, devastating groundwater pollution, and their harmful effects on our health and quality of life."

The attorneys general cite concerns that the proposed cuts or defunding of the EPA would have a chilling effect on the ability to hold polluters accountable. They write:

"...the EPA's ability to initiate a separate parallel enforcement action on federally delegated programs supports state enforcement actions in a consistent manner, without interference or favoritism, since there is always a "watch dog" to ensure federal law is being implemented on, at least, a baseline level across the country. Removal of this backstop would remove the federal law enforcement "floor" on state responses to federal violations, potentially creating a scenario where conduct that violates federal law is enforced in some states, but not in others. The resulting "uneven playing field" would create competitive imbalances for businesses and does not consistently protect the public from environmental harm."

In closing, the attorneys general remind the House and Senate committees of the positive impact the EPA and its policies have had on the country, writing:

"Since 1970, the EPA has steadily undertaken actions that have greatly improved our nation's environment, health and quality of life. These actions should be applauded and must have our continued investment and attention. A clean and healthy environment is part of what truly makes America great."

Earlier this week, Attorney General Madigan condemned a separate federal action to dismantle the Clean Power Plan, which she has long supported and defended.

Joining Madigan in sending today's letter to Congress were attorneys general from: Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, D.C.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

-30-

[Return to March 2017 Press Releases](#)

