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MADIGAN CALLS ON CONGRESS TO REJECT "DEEP AND DAMAGING" EPA CUTS, ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL BUDGET RIDERS

House and Senate Would Eliminate Over \$150 Million in Critical Funds, Slash EPA Staff by Over One-Quarter

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan, along with a coalition of 12 states, called on the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to reject "deep and damaging" cuts in funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and anti-environmental riders in federal budget bills.

In a letter to Congressional leadership, Madigan and the coalition charge 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 the EPA and omits any anti-environmental riders.

"Slashing the federal EPA's budget will hurt Illinois' environment and our communities," Madigan said. "I will fight any proposals to lessen the EPA's ability to partner with states in the critical mission of protecting public health and the environment."

Congress is reported to be negotiating with the federal administration on a final fiscal year 2018 budget for the EPA based on a House-passed appropriations bill (H.R. 3354) and a similar Senate Appropriations Committee proposal. While not as draconian as the \$2.4 billion in EPA cuts originally proposed by the 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 the EPA with its smallest budget since 1986, adjusting for inflation.

The bulk of the proposed cuts fall on central activities of EPA, such as environmental enforcement; setting environmental standards; issuing permits; monitoring emissions; and providing technical and legal assistance for enforcement, compliance, and oversight. The House proposal reduces funding for the EPA's core programs by 24 percent – an even deeper cut for these programs than proposed in the administration's irresponsible budget – while the Senate proposal shrinks this funding by 10 percent. The House and Senate budgets would likely cut the EPA's workforce by over one-quarter.

Madigan noted that the State of Illinois has a long record of working cooperatively with USEPA to bring several high-priority enforcement efforts against polluters—resulting in millions of dollars of fines and a cleaner environment for Illinois residents. These important efforts must not be undermined through budget cuts, said Madigan.

In addition, both the Senate and House are following the administration's lead by 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. Additionally, the House-passed budget attacks funding that is critical for protecting the health of some of the nation's most important bodies of water.

Madigan's letter argues that more – not less – funding for the EPA is needed. For example, it is clear that the 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.

Joining Madigan in sending the letter were the attorneys general of California, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and the District of Columbia, as well as the secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

The letter is available [here](#).

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