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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SUES U.S. EPA OVER FAILURE TO CONTROL METHANE POLLUTION

Madigan, 14 AGs & Chicago Sue EPA for Disregarding Legal Obligation to Stem Methane Emissions from Existing Oil & Gas Operations, Endangering Americans' Health & Safety

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan, along with 14 attorneys general and the city of Chicago, today filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for ignoring its legal duty to control emissions of methane – an extremely potent greenhouse gas – from existing oil and gas operations. Specifically, the suit charges that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has violated the federal Clean Air Act by unreasonably delaying its obligation under the Act to control methane emissions from these operations.

"The U.S. EPA continues to fail to protect people and the environment from harmful pollutants that are known to compromise public health," Madigan said. "This lawsuit demands that the EPA do its job."

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 U.S. and the second largest industrial source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions behind only electric power plants. 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.

In June 2016, the EPA finalized standards to regulate methane emissions from oil and gas operations that were constructed or substantially modified after September 2015. Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA was also required to establish guidelines for controlling methane emissions from sources that existed before September 2015.

In November 2016, EPA requested information from oil and gas operators that included the number and types of equipment at production facilities, and emission sources and control devices or practices. Even though the EPA began receiving that information in January 2017, in March 2017, EPA Administrator Pruitt – without any public notice or opportunity for comment – withdrew the request and sent a clear signal that the administration did not intend to meet its statutory obligation to control methane emissions from existing oil and gas operations.

As a result, in June 2017, Madigan and a coalition of 14 Attorneys General [pledged to sue](#) if the EPA failed to issue methane standards for existing sources in the oil and gas industry within 180 days. Since June 2017, the administration has failed to take action to issue the required standards.

The EPA has known since at least 2009 that methane endangers public health and welfare, and has had ample data on cost-effective measures for controlling methane emissions from oil and natural gas sources.

Madigan and the coalition argue that the EPA's failure to establish guidelines for controlling methane emissions from existing sources in the oil and gas industry is an unreasonable delay in performing a mandatory duty under the Clean Air Act. The suit asks the court to direct EPA to propose and adopt the methane regulations required by the Act for oil and gas operations, following an expeditious deadline established by the court.

The suit, available [here](#), was filed this morning in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Joining Madigan were the attorneys general for California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia, as well as the city of Chicago.

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