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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL DEMANDS EPA CONTROL METHANE POLLUTION

Raoul, Coalition: EPA Disregards its Legal Obligation to Curb Methane Emissions from Existing Oil and Gas Operations, Endangering Health and Safety of Communities

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today joined a multistate coalition to demand that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 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 EPA for violating the federal Clean Air Act by “unreasonably delaying” its mandatory obligation under the act to control emissions of methane — a potent climate change-causing greenhouse gas — from existing oil and gas operations for four years.

[Today's motion for summary judgment](#) asks the court to rule in favor of the plaintiffs, declare the EPA's four-year delay unreasonable and order the EPA to develop and expeditiously issue a rule to control methane emissions from existing sources in oil and gas operations.

“The uncontrolled emissions of greenhouse gasses like methane have caused climate change, which is intensifying unexpected floods, droughts and other environmental disasters,” Raoul said. “I will work to ensure that the EPA does its job and takes action to reduce these dangerous 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 U.S. 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 more than 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 the EPA to regulate methane from existing sources in oil and gas operations. Recognizing its statutory duty, and the urgency of reducing dangerous emissions, in 2016 the EPA set a course 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, the EPA abruptly pulled the plug on the process, effectively terminating all agency work to promulgate a regulation. Raoul and the coalition argue that the EPA stopped the process without any consideration of the law or facts, and with no public input, putting our communities and our climate at risk.

Joining Raoul in filing the motion are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, as well as the City of Chicago.