

Written Statement of Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Before the
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Johnson and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on EPA's regulatory efforts. The mission of EPA is to protect public health and the environment, and the Agency's regulatory efforts further those goals. We are guided in meeting those goals by science and by the law which serve as the backbone for each of the Agency's actions. I will focus my comments today on providing more detail for three rules which will provide tremendous benefits to public health and the environment.

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental and public health challenges we face. The most vulnerable among us – including children, older adults, people with heart or lung disease and people living in poverty – may be most at risk from the impacts of climate change. Fossil fuel-fired power plants are by far the largest source of U.S. CO₂ emissions. To address these emissions, EPA finalized the Clean Power Plan (CPP) on August 3, 2015. While the Clean Power Plan has been stayed by the Supreme Court, we are confident it will be upheld because it rests on strong scientific and legal foundations.

Since the stay was issued, many states have begun to move forward *voluntarily* to cut carbon pollution from power plants. They have also asked EPA to continue our outreach and development of supporting information that will help guide states when the Clean Power Plan becomes effective, which we are doing while ensuring that we fully comply with the stay. For example, last week we proposed design details for the optional Clean Energy Incentive Program to address state requests for additional clarification as states consider options to reduce carbon pollution.

In May, EPA announced steps to further reduce methane and other harmful air pollutants from new and modified sources in the oil and gas industry along with a critical first step in tackling methane emissions from existing sources. These steps will help combat climate change and reduce harmful air pollution.

These standards build on the agency's 2012 rules by adding requirements that the industry reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and by covering hydraulically fractured oil wells, along with additional equipment and activities that were not covered in the 2012 rules. They also require owners and operators to find and repair leaks, which can be a significant source of emissions.

These final standards reflect significant stakeholder input and, in particular, provide companies a pathway to demonstrate that requirements under a state rule are comparable to requirements in the final rule. This would allow sources to comply with a specific final rule requirement by complying with the state regulation.

As a first step in the regulation of existing sources of methane from the oil and gas sector, we have announced an Information Collection Request (ICR). The ICR, when finalized, will require companies with existing operations to provide information on technologies and costs that are critical to the development of reasonable regulations. In addition, EPA plans to seek voluntary information on innovative strategies that can accurately and cost-effectively locate, measure, and mitigate methane emissions.

The draft ICR was published on June 3, 2016, and the first of two public comment periods will last for 60 days.

Finally, in October 2015 the Agency completed the periodic review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards – or NAAQS – for ground level ozone. We have a primary standard directed at protecting public health and a secondary standard directed at protecting public welfare (e.g., trees, plants, and ecosystems). Exposure to ground level ozone can harm the respiratory system, aggravate asthma and lung diseases, and is linked to premature death. These health impacts pose

significant costs on Americans and can adversely affect their daily lives through missed school and work.

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to review the NAAQS every five years to make sure the standards continue to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety. Based on the law, a thorough review of the science, the recommendations of the agency's independent scientific advisors, and the assessment of EPA technical experts, my judgment was to strengthen the primary and secondary ozone standards to 70 parts per billion..

The two step process of a science-based NAAQS review followed by implementation is a system that works. EPA and state, local, and tribal co-regulators share a long history of successfully managing air quality. For ozone, existing and proposed federal measures like vehicle standards and power plant rules are reducing and will continue to further reduce ozone pollution nationwide. We expect that the vast majority of counties outside of California will meet the 2015 ozone NAAQS by 2025 without having to take additional action beyond federal measures.

I again thank the Committee for inviting me here today, and I look forward to your questions on these or other EPA actions.

Administrator Gina McCarthy



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Gina McCarthy is the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Appointed by President Obama in 2009 as Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, Gina McCarthy has been a leading advocate for common-sense strategies to protect public health and the environment.

Previously, McCarthy served as the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. During her career, which spans over 30 years, she has worked at both the state and local levels on critical environmental issues and helped coordinate policies on economic growth, energy, transportation and the environment.

McCarthy received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Anthropology from the University of Massachusetts at Boston and a joint Master of Science in Environmental Health Engineering and Planning and Policy from Tufts University.

When she is not in D.C., McCarthy lives in the Greater Boston area with her husband and dog, just a short bike ride away from their three children, Daniel, Maggie, and Julie.