

Testimony from Emily Thompson

American Lung Association

EPA Public Hearing on “Extension of Deadlines in Standards of Performance for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources and Emissions Guidelines for Existing Sources: Oil and Natural Gas Sector Climate Review Final Rule”

Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-0162; FRL-12675-01- OAR

As prepared for delivery

Hello, my name is Emily Thompson, and I am the Manager of Nationwide Policy for Clean Outdoor Air at the American Lung Association. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in today’s hearing on this crucial rule to protect the health of Americans from pollution from oil and gas operations.

I am here today, alongside my colleagues, to strongly urge EPA to reverse the delay in implementing the critical compliance deadlines for reducing methane emissions and instead move swiftly to fully implement the final standards.

The stakes for public health could not be higher. Emissions from the oil and gas sector include a dangerous mix of pollutants alongside methane, including smog-forming volatile organic compounds (or VOCs), the known carcinogen benzene, formaldehyde and soot. Collectively, these pollutants drive asthma attacks, hospital visits, cancer risks and even premature deaths. EPA’s own analysis shows that the commonsense 2023 methane rule would prevent up to 1,500 premature deaths and 100,000 asthma attacks each year. A delay means more preventable health harms.

The burden of this pollution is not shared equally. Frontline communities living near oil and gas operations are exposed to higher concentrations of toxic emissions and can face increased risk of asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease, cancer and premature death. Children, seniors and people with existing health conditions are especially vulnerable.

The American Lung Association’s 2025 “State of the Air” report found that more than 125 million people in the U.S. already live in counties with failing grades for ozone pollution. Delaying implementation of this rule would only make the problem worse. EPA has projected that the methane standards will prevent 3.8 million tons of methane, 960,000 tons of VOCs, and 36,000 tons of toxic air pollution over the next decade. Those are lifesaving reductions that we cannot afford to delay.

The risks are especially severe for pregnant people and children. Oil and gas pollution is linked to preterm birth, which is a leading cause of infant death in the U.S. A 2020 study in

the Eagle Ford Shale area of Texas found a 50% higher risk of preterm birth for pregnant women exposed to oil and gas emissions. And children, who breathe faster, spend more time outdoors and have still-developing lungs, are particularly vulnerable. A Yale School of Public Health study found that children born near unconventional oil and gas development were 2-3x more likely to develop leukemia between the ages of 2 and 7.

Delaying implementation of this rule will be a lost opportunity to protect children, families and communities nationwide. We urge EPA to reverse course on the extension and move without delay to implement these lifesaving standards.