My name is Diana Van Vleet (spell), I am the Director of Nationwide Clean Air Advocacy for the American Lung Association. I live in Purcellville, Virginia and I am a mom of two, soon to be three. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am here to speak in opposition of EPA's proposal to revise the 2024 Methane Rule.

This proposed revision would weaken EPA's 2024 rule, which would have significantly reduced pollution from the oil and gas sector, including methane. EPA's proposal to weaken this rule would result in more dangerous pollution that would harm health, especially the health of children and pregnant women.

EPA estimates that this proposal is estimated to result in 60 million more tons of methane, 17 million more tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and 22.3 million more tons of hazardous air pollutants.

Collectively, these pollutants are directly linked to asthma attacks, reduced lung function, heart disease, adverse birth outcomes and increased risk of cancer. EPA's own analysis of the 2024 methane rule showed the standards would prevent up to 1,500 premature deaths and 100,000 asthma attacks each year.

People living near oil and gas operations can face greater exposure to harmful emissions, and certain groups face even more risk – including children and pregnant women. Children's lungs, bodies and brains are still developing, they breathe more air for their body size than adults, and they frequently spend more time outdoors. 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.

Oil and gas pollution is also 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.

Weakening leak detection and controls on flaring and venting will harm health, particularly for children. Pollution from fossil fuel venting and flaring alone results in $7.4 billion in health damages, more than 700 premature deaths and 73,000 asthma exacerbations among children annually.

Methane emissions, particularly from abandoned and underregulated oil and gas wells, represent a significant and preventable threat that is accelerating global warming. Methane is over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period and is a major driver of climate change.

Climate change is already harming the health of Americans across the country, including my family. One small example is the explosion of ticks here in Virginia, and the terrifying increase in Lyme disease in my community. I picked ticks off of my 3 year old and 1 year old this summer and prayed that they didn't contract a disease that could impact their health for the rest of their lives. That fear is likely only going to get worse in coming years.

Lastly, I will just say that EPA yet again fails to quantify the health harms that would result from weakening these health protections and thereby allowing tons upon tons of harmful pollutants into the air. Yet EPA did quantify what the cost savings to industry would be. By counting industry savings while leaving the health costs to families and communities unaccounted for, EPA continues to move away from its fundamental mission of protecting public health.

On behalf of everyone with lungs in America, especially children with developing lungs, please do not finalize this proposal and give polluters a pass to dump tons of toxic emissions into our air.