Shannon Baker

American Lung Association

Hello, my name is Shannon Baker (spell name), I am Director of Advocacy the American Lung Association and I am calling in from Louisville, Kentucky. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am here to stand in opposition to EPA's proposal to revise the 2024 Methane Rule.

According to the American Lung Association's 2026 "State of the Air" report, more than 4 in 10 Americans are living in communities with unhealthy air. Despite some nationwide progress on cleaning up air pollution, more than 44% of Americans—over 152 million people—are living in places with unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution. Volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, – which are released alongside methane – interact with sunlight to form ground-level ozone pollution, or smog. Ozone pollution is a widespread problem due to the record-breaking heat the country has seen in recent years. 129.1 million people were exposed to levels of ozone that put their health at risk, according to the "State of the Air" report. My city, Louisville, Kentucky, ranked in the top 25 worst cities in the country for ozone pollution, meaning my health and the health of my family was put at risk by breathing in dangerous air pollution.

When inhaled, ozone pollution acts like a sunburn on your lungs. But ozone is not the only harmful air pollutant associated with oil and gas operations. As mentioned previously, VOCs, including known carcinogens such as benzene and formaldehyde, and nitrogen oxides are released alongside methane. 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. In Kentucky, where asthma affects more than 1 in 10, leading to more than 12,000 emergency department visits and in excess of 1,000 hospitalizations in 2024, the burden is particularly acute.

Further, methane is a potent climate pollutant, accelerating climate-driven health impacts we are already seeing across the country. In recent years I have seen more frequent and severe weather threatening the health of Kentucky residents, including the Ohio River flooding in Louisville in the Spring of 2025 and more recent wildfires in eastern Kentucky.

EPA has already substantially delayed the implementation and enforcement of the 2024 Methane Rule. With this proposal, EPA is further weakening the critical standards, leading to increased health harms to communities living closest to oil and gas production and locking in continued exposure to dangerous air pollution for years to come.

The 2024 Methane Rule was developed with significant input from national health experts, community leaders and advocates, the oil and gas industry, investors and members of Congress. EPA has a responsibility to protect human health and the environment, not rewrite the rules to benefit polluters. I urge EPA to abandon this proposal and uphold strong methane standards. Thank you.