

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 13, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler:

As you know, the EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment, and in doing so, to enforce laws such as the Clean Air Act. This law was the nation's first comprehensive pollution control law that imposed sweeping and ambitious restrictions on emissions of air pollutants, and was championed by Maine's Senator Ed Muskie, whose Senate seat I now hold. It is on behalf of the people of Maine and in honor of Senator Muskie's commitment to a better environment that I write, appalled at the regressive environmental actions of the EPA this week.

By your own admission, human actions are contributing to climate change, and experts agree climate change is a serious challenge that will have catastrophic consequences if we do not act to slow emissions that are warming the planet. This includes limiting methane emissions, which traps atmospheric heat 84-87 times more effectively than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. According to the EPA:

Over the last two centuries, methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled, largely due to human-related activities. Because methane is both a powerful greenhouse gas and short-lived compared to carbon dioxide, achieving significant reductions would have a rapid and significant effect on atmospheric warming potential.<sup>1</sup>

That is why it is shocking that the EPA has announced this week that it plans to undo regulations that help curtail methane emissions and detect methane leaks at gas and oil facilities, even with full knowledge of the harm that methane emissions cause and that gas and oil companies are the biggest emitters of methane in the U.S. These actions by the agency tasked with protecting the environment are contrary to its core mission.

I urge you to use your position as the head of the EPA, and look to the agency's own research and analysis to continue to limit methane emissions instead of promoting emissions that will only hasten the devastating impacts of climate change and sabotage the environment.

Sincerely,



Angus S. King, Jr.  
UNITED STATES SENATOR

<sup>1</sup> Importance of Methane. Retrieved August 11, 2020, from <https://www.epa.gov/gmi/importance-methane>.