

May 16, 2022

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES EPA TO STRENGTHEN REGULATIONS ON HEAVY-DUTY TRUCK EMISSIONS

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a multistate coalition of 19 attorneys general, today urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to impose stronger regulations on oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions and other pollutants from heavy-duty trucks. NOx, a smog-forming pollutant that exacerbates asthma and other health problems, has outsized impacts on communities of color and low-income communities, who disproportionately live near transportation and trade corridors.

In today's letter, Raoul and the coalition urge the EPA to adopt the most stringent option in its proposal for regulating NOx emissions from heavy-duty trucks. These stronger standards are vital to reducing NOx emissions in environmental justice communities and to helping states attain and maintain national ambient air quality standards for ozone and particulate matter.

"Emissions from large trucks have been proven to be detrimental to human health, especially children, seniors and individuals with lung disease and other ailments," Raoul said. "I urge the EPA to adopt stronger emission standards, which will not only protect human health and the environment but also lead to savings in the long term for our health care system and manufacturers alike."

On-road heavy-duty vehicles are the largest source of transportation-related NOx emissions. Communities of color and low-income communities, which are disproportionately located near railyards, ports, warehouses and major roadways, are most vulnerable to NOx pollution and the resulting health impacts. But while the environmental and health impacts of NOx are well known, today's heavy-duty trucks do not effectively control NOx emissions, especially when they are at idle, moving slowly or in stop-and-go traffic.

In September 2021, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) established pioneering exhaust emission standards for NOx that are 90% more stringent than currently applicable federal heavy-duty NOx emission standards. These reductions, which are equivalent to taking 16 million light-duty cars off the road, are expected to prevent roughly 3,900 premature deaths and 3,150 hospitalizations statewide.

In today's letter, Raoul and the attorneys general urge the EPA to adopt the most stringent option in its proposal, which would implement stronger NOx standards in a two-step approach, first increasing stringency in model year 2027 and then increasing stringency again for model year 2031. If adopted, these standards would align federal standards more closely with California's NOx standards. As California has shown, stronger standards are not only good for the environment and public health, but technologically feasible and cost-effective.

The Attorney General's office enforces Illinois' environmental protection laws. Attorney General Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division, which enforces civil environmental laws, has recovered millions of dollars from polluters and required companies to undertake environmental improvement projects in communities impacted by pollution. Raoul encourages residents to report environmental justice and other environmental concerns to his office by emailing ej@ilag.gov.

Joining Raoul in filing the comment letter are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.