



E. SCOTT PRUITT
ADMINISTRATOR

July 11, 2017

Mr. Ron Ness
President
North Dakota Petroleum Council
100 West Broadway, Suite 200
P.O. Box 1395
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

RE: EPA Clean Air Act Compliance Assurance Activities in the Oil and Gas Sector

Dear Mr. Ness:

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Act enforcement and compliance assurance activities in the oil and gas sector. We discussed the concerns raised in your correspondence with involved staff at the EPA and the North Dakota Department of Health. We are focused on increased coordination and collaboration among the EPA, our state partners and oil and gas producers.

The EPA acknowledges the critical role that the oil and gas industry plays in ensuring the nation's energy independence through domestic energy production. We are committed to working with the oil and gas industry and our state partners to ensure domestic oil and gas production occurs in a safe and responsible manner and in compliance with applicable environmental laws. We recognize the efforts industry and our state partners have made to reduce excess emissions from oil and gas operations in order to protect and improve the nation's air quality.

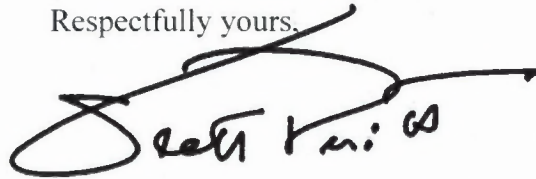
The agency intends to continue working with NDDH to address violations and reduce Bakken oil and gas emissions. Going forward, the EPA plans to focus its Bakken oil and gas compliance assurance activities on operations on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation where the state does not have Clean Air Act authority, and NDDH will focus its efforts on operations outside of Indian country. Close coordination on these efforts will help to ensure a level playing field.

Your letter raises broad concerns about the agency's relationships and communications involving the oil and gas sector. To begin to address those concerns, I have directed agency staff to take the following steps:

1. Each region will work with their counterpart state oil and gas regulatory agencies to enhance existing relationships and define EPA/state-lead responsibilities on compliance and enforcement work to eliminate duplication of efforts. This may include discussions of tools to promote compliance in the oil and gas sector, joint planning and a process for elevating any material disagreements with states that cannot be resolved in the normal course of business.
2. Nationally, we will develop best practices for the judicious use of Clean Air Act section 114 information requests in the oil and gas sector, such as tailoring requests to potential violations and elevating for senior policy consideration any planned information requests that meet certain criteria.
3. We plan to convene a roundtable with representatives of the oil and gas sector and state regulatory agencies to discuss industry concerns and enhance communication while ensuring safe and responsible domestic oil and gas production.

I hope these steps will help to address your concerns and provide a solid basis for our continuing partnership with state agencies. We welcome your ideas in this regard. Please contact Deb Thomas, Region 8 Acting Regional Administrator, at (303) 312-6532 with any questions or recommendations you may have.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Scott Pruitt", with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

E. Scott Pruitt

cc: Deb Thomas, Acting Regional Administrator, Region 8

Larry Starfield, Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Patrick Traylor, Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Patrick Davis, Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Land and Emergency Management