

April 5, 2022

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES EPA TO RETHINK STANDARDS REGULATING PARTICULATE MATTER POLLUTION FROM AIRPLANES

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a multistate coalition, urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt more protective standards for particulate matter emissions from airplanes. As currently written, the EPA’s proposed rule would set emissions standards for particulate matter for commercial aircrafts that are legally inadequate and fail to mitigate the harms of this pollution by any amount. Stronger standards are essential to make progress on the federal government’s stated commitment to address disproportionate environmental burdens in low-income communities and communities of color.

“Airplane exhaust emissions contain a host of dangerous pollutants, including particulate matter, that have been proven to be harmful to human health,” Raoul said. “It is vital the EPA fully examine the risks borne by particulate matter and establish sufficient guidelines to address the health threat posed by these contaminants.”

Particulate matter pollution causes up to 45,000 deaths per year nationwide and disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, including those populations in Illinois. Particulate matter is linked to increased mortality from COVID-19 and other serious public health problems including cardiovascular disease, respiratory impacts, and cancer.

The worst health effects occur from particulate matter emitted from airplanes during takeoff and landing, most impacting communities that live, work and go to school near airports. These communities are disproportionately low-income communities and communities of color.

While the proposed rule acknowledges significant evidence that these communities are inequitably impacted by particulate matter pollution from airplanes, the EPA understates the environmental justice impacts of this pollution due to inadequate monitoring data and underestimations of particulate matter’s health effects. The proposed rule also fails to reduce particulate matter pollution at all, even though there are jet engines currently in use that reduce particulate matter emissions by orders of magnitude far surpassing those required by the proposed standards.

[In yesterday’s letter](#), Raoul and the coalition highlight the deficiencies of the EPA’s proposed rule, arguing that:

- The EPA fails to meaningfully analyze the impact of particulate matter emissions from airplanes on environmental justice communities.
- The EPA’s failure to consider feasible reductions in particulate matter emissions is unlawful and arbitrary.
- The EPA must evaluate and adopt emission standards based on the full range of technologically-feasible control technologies and result in reductions that reflect the severe health and environmental impacts from particulate matter pollution.

Attorney General Raoul is also [part of multistate litigation](#) challenging the EPA’s similarly ineffective standards regulating greenhouse gas emissions from airplanes.

Joining Raoul in filing the comment letter are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

