E. SCOTT PRUITT
ADMINISTRATOR

July 13, 2017

Ms. Tracee Bentley
Executive Director
Colorado Petroleum Council
1660 Lincoln Street, Suite 2320
Denver, Colorado 80264

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

Dear Ms. Bentley:

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 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. We are focused on increased coordination and collaboration among the EPA, our state partners and oil and gas producers.

The agency 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 plans to continue to work cooperatively with CDPHE on investigations of oil and gas operations and other compliance assurance activities. We are particularly focused on the Denver-Julesburg Basin because of its place in the Denver Metro/Front Range ozone nonattainment area. The EPA anticipates that the state will take the lead in pursuing state-only enforcement actions in the basin and throughout Colorado. The EPA will generally defer to the state where the state wishes to pursue state-only action and will join the State on a limited, as requested basis. The EPA will take the lead on oil and gas compliance assurance activities on operations in Indian country in Colorado.

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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,

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
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