

A. DONALD McEACHIN

4TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE

314 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-6365

RICHMOND DISTRICT OFFICE

110 N. ROBINSON ST. SUITE 403
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23220
(804) 486-1840

SUFFOLK DISTRICT OFFICE

131 N. SATATOGA STREET, SUITE B
SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA 23434
(757) 942-6050



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4604

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

September 12th, 2022

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

Thank you for your leadership and the bold action the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has taken to address the emission of greenhouse gases. I write to you today specifically regarding methane emissions, which have at least 25 times the global warming potential as carbon dioxide.

I am concerned about the accuracy of our current methods of estimating methane emissions, particularly with regards to methane emissions from landfills. In August 2022, scientists at the SRON Netherlands Institute for Space Research published a study using multimodal satellite technology to detect and measure methane emissions at the facility level. Their results indicated that emissions from landfills in four major cities worldwide were about twice as high as previously estimated. This study—taken together with other studies using newer monitoring technologies—suggests a worrisome systemic undercounting of landfill methane emissions.

Recent federal investments provide the opportunity to improve national measurement and monitoring techniques for methane emissions from landfills and other key emission sources. Notably, Section 60105 of the Inflation Reduction Act appropriates \$20 million specifically for monitoring methane emissions. As EPA works to implement this historic legislation, I urge you to allocate adequate funding towards the development of methods to measure and monitor methane emissions from landfills more accurately. This could include investments in research, technology development, infrastructure upgrades, and systems for data collection and analysis.

Within the Fourth District of Virginia, there are several key sources of methane emissions which may present useful test cases as EPA develops its methane monitoring capabilities. These include the Atlantic Waste Disposal Landfill, Charles City County Landfill, and Shoosmith Sanitary Landfill. In addition to landfills, agricultural operations are known to be key methane emitters and hog farms in Virginia and in the Southeast may present an opportunity to pilot improved measurement methods.

I look forward to working with you on this issue and seeing improved methane monitoring techniques reflected in future reporting in EPA's Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks. As we redouble our efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, it is imperative we have reliable methods of accounting for emissions and measuring our progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Donald McEachin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress