

February 17, 2026

## Endangerment Finding Final Rule

### Background

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for protecting public health and the environment. That role has included protecting people from climate pollution and its impacts, such as extreme weather and health risks that threaten the lives of people across the globe. However, on February 12, 2026, Donald Trump and EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin repealed the [Endangerment Finding](#), thereby eliminating the EPA's requirement to protect people from the pollution that causes climate change. In the same action, the Trump administration rolled back vehicle pollution standards, despite evidence that strong pollution standards cut pollution, improve health, and save consumers money.

The [Clean Air Act](#), which provides the legal foundation for the Endangerment Finding, requires the EPA to protect people from "any air pollutant from any class or classes of new motor vehicles or new motor vehicle engines" that the agency deems "causes or contributes to air pollution that may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare." In the 2007 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *Massachusetts vs. EPA*, the court [found](#) that carbon pollution and other climate-warming pollutants (greenhouse gases) are "air pollutants" as defined by the Clean Air Act. The court directed the EPA to make a final scientific determination whether emissions of these pollutants from new motor vehicles endanger health or welfare.

In 2009, the EPA [determined](#) that carbon dioxide, methane, and four other climate pollutants do endanger public health, and that emissions from cars and trucks contribute to that danger. Over the years, the EPA has repeatedly reaffirmed that greenhouse gas emissions endanger the public and that pollution from power plants, oil and gas operations, and other sources contribute to that danger. The EPA's Endangerment Finding has been unsuccessfully challenged in over 100 lawsuits, often by oil and gas interests, including fossil fuel producers and anti-regulation think tanks.

Recent Supreme Court decisions have limited the scope of some of the EPA's climate protections, but none of those decisions undermined the original basis for the Endangerment Finding or the EPA's duty to act under the law. Despite consistent support of the Endangerment Finding in the courts, Donald Trump signed an executive order on the first day of his second term that created a framework to eliminate it.

## **EHP's Statement**

The EPA's stated mission is to protect human health and the environment. Despite that, the agency is currently undertaking what it has called the "[biggest deregulatory action in history](#)" by reconsidering, restructuring, or terminating 31 regulations that support human health by setting standards for clean air and water. These actions reverse decades of hard-won progress to protect health and wellbeing, especially in the face of our country's continuing dependence on and growing commitment to fossil fuels.

Dismantling these necessary protections will enable polluting industries to burn more fossil fuels with fewer immediate consequences to themselves, but with more long-term consequences to those across the United States and throughout the world. Greenhouse gas emissions are already contributing to more frequent and intense weather events, such as storms, floods, wildfires, and extreme temperatures, more disease-carrying insects, less access to safe drinking water, and other health catastrophes. Trump and Zeldin's action to repeal the Endangerment Finding has already eliminated emissions standards for cars and trucks, but it also sets the stage to undo pollution limits for power plants and other stationary sources of climate pollution. These changes will make the dangerous conditions we are already seeing worse.

By claiming that climate change, and the pollution that contributes to it, pose no threat to public health or the environment, [Trump and Zeldin are defying decades of scientific evidence](#) produced in thousands of studies that clearly demonstrate the danger of greenhouse gases and their connection to fossil fuels. The influence of human activity on climate change has been established by science, and additional research continues to reinforce that relationship. Nevertheless, the [Trump Administration has proceeded with its coordinated dismantling of pollution regulations](#), which, based on the science, will contribute to higher rates of illness, healthcare costs, premature deaths, property damage, and displacement. These actions run counter to the role of government agencies, such as the EPA, which are tasked with ensuring the health and safety of people who live in our country.

The Environmental Health Project recognizes the legitimacy of the Endangerment Finding and remains committed to defending the health of those who are impacted by pollution from fossil fuel development, which is one of the leading causes of climate change. Since our founding, we have elevated reliable scientific research about pollution exposures in order to support more robust systems for protecting public health. We will continue to do so in this widening gap between scientific facts and myopic policy.

## **About the Environmental Health Project**

The [Environmental Health Project](#) (EHP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit public health organization that defends public health in the face of shale gas development. EHP provides frontline communities with timely monitoring, interpretation, and guidance while engaging diverse stakeholders: health professionals, researchers, community organizers, policy makers, and others.