

**September 23, 2020**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL OPPOSES NEW NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT ROLLBACK THAT THREATENS ENDANGERED SPECIES**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a multistate coalition, announced his [intent to sue the federal government](#) over a rollback of federal environmental protections for endangered species under the National Environmental Policy Act.

On July 16, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued a rule that would substantially undermine the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a federal statute adopted in 1970 that requires federal agencies to identify and reduce potential environmental harm resulting from federal actions, including approvals for major infrastructure and energy projects. On Aug. 28, Raoul and a coalition of attorneys general filed a lawsuit challenging the rule. Among the issues raised, Raoul and the coalition argued that the CEQ had curtailed public participation in the NEPA process.

Today's 60-day notice of intent to sue will allow the coalition to amend their complaint filed in August to address the federal government's failure to consider the rule's impact on endangered and threatened species, in violation of the Endangered Species Act.

"The continued attempts to roll back federal environmental protection regulations will have long-term consequences for our environment, our states' ecosystems, economies and public health," Raoul said. "I will file this lawsuit because the public deserves know the impact infrastructure and energy projects will have on the environment before they begin."

The 60-day notice of intent to sue argues that the rule allows many federal projects to evade environmental review under NEPA. Without that review, greater harm to fish and wildlife likely will occur; yet, the CEQ did not consult with the federal wildlife agencies as required by the Endangered Species Act.

Moreover, the rule instructs agencies not to consider "cumulative impacts" or the environmental impacts of a proposed action combined with the anticipated impacts of other existing or future projects. Multiple intrusions into a single site or habitat can be devastating for the existing ecosystem. If agencies do not consider and disclose these impacts, they inevitably will disregard them in approving major federal projects throughout the country. In short, less frequent and less comprehensive NEPA review under the rule will cause greater harm to protected species.

Joining Raoul in sending the intent to sue are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Guam, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin; as well as New York City and Harris County, Texas.