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Bonfire of the vanities: Trump's deregulation agenda scrabbles for pandemic foothold

With most of America working from home during the coronavirus pandemic, the question of how to enforce environmental regulations related to oil and gas activity has caused a headache for the federal body responsible, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In a letter to the White House dated 20 March 2020, The American Petroleum Institute (API) urged Trump to temporarily waive “non-essential compliance obligations”.

The API claimed oil and gas staff were unable to carry out environmental reporting, monitoring, and training needed to meet air and water pollution reporting regulations.

Six days later the EPA relaxed regulations, backdated to 13 March, allowing companies to self-monitor and determine whether or not they are meeting pollution guidelines. No fines or penalties will be issued by the EPA for noncompliance.

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