The Trump Administration has embarked on a campaign of postponing pollution regulations that protect the public health. Even if these are only temporary delays, rather than steps toward permanently weakening health protections, the delays are not innocuous. To put it as bluntly as possible, Americans will die as a result of these delays.

For instance, the delay in implementing new air quality standards will directly impact public health. Scott Pruitt announced at the beginning of the month that he was postponing phased implementation of tougher restrictions of ozone for a year. T EPA projected the benefits for separately for California and the rest of the country, because the compliance date is later for California. Putting the numbers together, a one-year delay translates into an extra 420-880 deaths and 390,000 asthma attacks in 2025. Of course, the reduction in air pollution won't magically appear out of nowhere in 2025; there will be reduced numbers of deaths and heart attacks as steps are taken toward implementation, and all those interim health benefits will be delayed.

This is not an isolated example. In May, Pruitt announced plans to delay limits on dumping of waste by power plants in water bodies. The rule was projected to keep 700,000 tons of toxic metals and other pollutants out of waterways each year. EPA is also putting a two-year delay on a rule for safer storage of hazardous substances at chemical plants. And EPA also decided to delay implementation of a rule governing dangerous emissions from oil and gas facilities, despite admitting that doing so would disproportionately impact the health of children. And there are others: the Administration has delayed health-based rules on e-cigarettes, food labeling, silica dust at construction sites, and safety training for truck drivers, all to the cost of public health and safety.

This apparent indifference to public health should not be surprising. This is the same Administration that proposed a $6 billion cut for the National Institutes of Health, a 30% cut in FDA's budget, and a billion dollar cut for the Centers for Disease Control.

In a way, delays are a more insidious attack on public health, because they seem more innocuous. But just as justice delayed is justice denied, the same is true of public health. Those who die from a "mere" delay in protecting the public are just as dead as those who die from a complete failure to do so.