

EPA: Cuts will hamper pollution work

By Dina Cappiello, The Associated Press

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WASHINGTON -- A top environmental official is warning lawmakers that automatic spending cuts due next month would jeopardize EPA's ability to protect against oil spills, air pollution, and hazardous waste.

The cuts are outlined in a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee obtained by the Associated Press. In the letter, deputy EPA administrator Bob Perciasepe says cuts would shut down some air pollution monitors and halt some cleanups at the nation's most hazardous waste sites.

The air quality forecasting system that keeps school children and people with asthma inside on bad air days could also be eliminated.

And the EPA, which inspects only a tiny fraction of facilities with the potential for an oil spill, would do even fewer inspections if Congress can't make a deal by March 1.