A look at the regulatory challenges and opportunities for the midstream oil and gas sector that must coordinate local, state, and federal requirements from multiple agencies.
We rely on the oil and gas sector to help give us the energy to move forward and energize us throughout the day. As the globe continues to strive to strike a balance between cleaner forms of energy, grid and infrastructure reliability, and the economics of energy, oil and gas production and operations continue to be at the forefront of the discussion balancing environmental and energy opportunities. Oil and gas producers must be mindful of maintaining compliance with environmental standards, understanding the environmental impacts of new production or technologies, and meeting the challenges and opportunities of permitting new pipeline or infrastructure to grow and meet public energy demands. The focus of this issue is the range of issues facing the oil and gas sector as it looks to continue to provide energy to meet the growing demand, while complying with complex regulations and guidelines.

In our first article, Robin Rorick and Howard Feldman provide some perspective on the general status of permitting challenges for the oil and gas sector, looking both at the regulations at the forefront of pipeline permitting and effects from the Trump Administration’s infrastructure plan on permitting current and future pipeline projects.

With production growth of the Marcellus Shale and other areas in recent years owing to technological advances in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, it has become a key part of the discussion to better understand the environmental impacts from these production activities. Natalie Pekney, Matthew Reeder, and Mumbi Mundia-Howe detail the preliminary results of an ambient air quality study conducted at the Marcellus Shale Energy and Environment Laboratory in Morgantown, WV, which focused on methane and volatile organic compound (VOC) concentrations during a variety of oil and gas production activities.

Finally, Hedrick Strickland and Bob Fraser discuss the amendments to the Refinery Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) 1 Rules and fenceline monitoring used for compliance. With fenceline monitoring data becoming publicly available in 2019, this article steps beyond the technical challenges and discusses community and neighboring facility considerations beyond the fenceline as communities look to understand and interpret the available information.

I invite EM readers to consider the various, interconnected air quality and environmental issues facing the oil and gas sector today that are presented in this issue.