

An Open Letter to President Obama from Groups Protecting Public Health

July 21, 2011

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned organizations and our members and supporters – representing the health, medical, consumer, faith, community-based, environmental -communities – urge you to protect public health and the environment by supporting more protective standards for ground-level ozone (smog).

Ozone, the primary component of smog, is the nation's most pervasive air pollutant. Millions of Americans causes premature death. The effects are worse for sensitive populations including children, the elderly, and people with asthma and other respiratory illness.

We call for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set a primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ozone at the most protective end of the range recommended by the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), and a secondary standard sufficient to protect forests and plants throughout the nation from ozone damage as recommended by CASAC and the National Park Service. These standards, based on health science, are required to be set at a level that protects public health with an adequate margin of safety.

After extensive review, CASAC on March 30, 2011, unanimously advised EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson that the scientific evidence strongly supports a new primary ozone standard. The EPA estimates that setting a standard at the lower end of the range recommended by CASAC would save over 10,000 lives annually.

Throughout the years, the Clean Air Act has built a solid science and health foundation, making it one of the nation's most effective public health laws. By saving millions of lives, avoiding millions of cases of pollution-related illness, and preventing millions of lost work days, the Clean Air Act has also been an economic success story. The total benefits of the Clean Air Act between 1990 and 2010 exceeded total costs by an estimated 35 to 1.

Efforts to reduce ground-level ozone concentrations have also been successful, with levels declining in many cities, including Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Houston and Milwaukee over the last decade. But millions of Americans including children, the elderly and people of color are still regularly exposed to smog levels that are unhealthy; as a result hundreds of thousands more are sick and tens of thousands die.

Now that the science is clear that the standards for ground-level ozone are too low in order to protect public health, EPA has an obligation to follow the science. The agency should do so promptly by mid-summer as promised, in order to start the long overdue process of delivering clean air to the American people.

We urge you to act now and support truly protective ozone standards.

Sincerely,

Alabama

American Lung Association in Alabama
Cahaba Riverkeeper
Children's Environmental Protection
Alliance and Community Forums

Alaska

American Lung Association in Alaska
GillepsieHall Health and Wellness
Marketing
Western Resource Advocates

Arizona

American Lung Association in Arizona
Arizona Asthma Coalition
Arizona PIRG (Arizona Public Interest
Research Group)

Arkansas

American Lung Association in Arkansas

California

American Lung Association in California
California Public Health Association-North
California Thoracic Society
Center for Biological Diversity
Citizen's Coalition for a Safe Community
Coalition for Clean Air
COFEM - Consejo de Federaciones
Mexicanas
East Yard Communities for Environmental
Justice
Energy Independence Now
Environmental Law Foundation
Healthy Child Healthy World
KyotoUSA
Loma Linda University School of Medicine,
Division of Neonatology
Mercy Center for Lung and Esophageal
Surgery
Physicians for Social
Responsibility/Sacramento
Rose Foundation for Communities and the
Environment
SF-Bay Area Physicians for Social
Responsibility
San Francisco Asthma Task Force
Siskiyou County Public Health Dept.

Colorado

American Lung Association in Colorado
Colorado Environmental Coalition
Colorado Conservation Voters
National Environmental Health Association

Connecticut

American Lung Association in Connecticut
The Great Land Conservation Trust

Delaware

American Lung Association in Delaware
Pulmonary Associates, Newark Delaware

District of Columbia

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Heart Association
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Heart Association
American Lung Association in the District
of Columbia
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Clean Air Watch
Clean Water Action
Community Action Partnership
Earth Justice
Energy Action Coalition
Environment America
Environmental Defense Fund
ENE (Environment Northeast)
Friends Committee on National Legislation
League of Conservation Voters
National Association of County & City
Health Officials
National Hispanic Environmental Council
(NHEC)
National Resources Defense Council
Outdoor Alliance
Sierra Club
US Climate Action Network

Florida

American Lung Association in Florida
Common Ground for Conservation
Voces Verdes

Georgia

American Lung Association in Georgia
Atlanta Bicycle Coalition
Citizens for Progressive Transit
Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda
Earth Covenant Ministry
Environmental Community Action Inc
Environment Georgia
GEORGIA Women's Action for New
Directions

Rhode Island

American Lung Association in Rhode Island
Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island
Childhood Lead Action Project
Rhode Island State Nurses Association
RICOSH

South Carolina

American Lung Association in South Carolina
Conservation Voters of South Carolina

South Dakota

American Lung Association in South Dakota

Tennessee

American Lung Association in Tennessee
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

Texas

American Lung Association in Texas
Downwinders at Risk
Environment Texas
Flower Mound Shares
FracDallas
Health Professionals for Clean Air
Trinity- First Weekday Ministries

Utah

American Lung Association in Utah
Breathe Utah
HEAL Utah
Utah Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club
Utah Moms for Clean Air
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
Wasatch Clean Air Coalition

Vermont

American Lung Association in Vermont
Idle-Free VT Inc.
Vermont Public Health Association
Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG)

Virginia

American Lung Association in Virginia
Health Care Without Harm

Washington

American Lung Association in Washington
Climate Solutions
Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light
Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders
Washington Asthma Initiative

West Virginia

American Lung Association in West Virginia

Wisconsin

American Lung Association in Wisconsin

Wyoming

American Lung Association of Wyoming
Midwest Environmental Advocates
Saving Our Air Resource
Wisconsin Environment
Wisconsin Asthma Coalition