

July 11, 2022

Administrator Michael S. Regan
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, our 101 organizations write to urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to quickly set stronger National Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) pollution of no higher than 8 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) for the annual standard and no higher than 25 µg/m³ for the 24-hour standard. Setting tighter limits on harmful PM_{2.5} pollution—in line with the levels recommended by the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) earlier this year—will protect millions of Americans, including vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, and people with asthma and other respiratory and heart conditions.

Our organizations were pleased that EPA decided to return to a rigorous, science-based process and reconsider the PM_{2.5} standard after the previous Administration chose to leave the outdated standard in place. A strong body of scientific and health evidence indicates that the current, outdated standard is not adequately protective of public health. Particle pollution exposure causes increased infant mortality, cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, cognitive impairments, and premature death. Additionally, new studies have shown that even low levels of air pollution exposure, including to particulate matter, lead to increased risks of Covid-19 infection.¹

The 2022 American Lung Association's "State of the Air" Report found that under the existing standards over 63 million Americans experience unhealthy spikes in daily particle pollution, and more than 20 million Americans experience dangerous levels of particle pollution on a year-round basis.² Further illustrating how widespread the PM_{2.5} pollution problem is, based on the most recent official EPA data, more than 132 million people reside in an area with pollution levels that violate the standard levels we recommend. The science demonstrates that their health and wellbeing is suffering from the unsafe air in their communities.

A new report from Environmental Defense Fund found an annual standard of 8 ug/m³ could avoid 19,000 premature deaths annually and prevent 46,000 emergency department visits for pediatric asthma.³ EPA's mission is to protect public health and the environment, and

¹<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2791305?resultClick=1>

²<https://www.lung.org/research/sota>

³<https://globalcleanair.org/files/2022/05/Analysis-of-PM2.5-Related-Health-Burdens-Under-Current-and-Alternative-NAAQS.pdf>

strengthening these standards based on CASAC's recommendation and the abundance of sound scientific and medical evidence will save lives and protect millions of Americans suffering from chronic health issues due to pollution exposure. As is often the case, these health burdens are disproportionately borne by communities of color near heavily polluting facilities and high-traffic roadways. Stronger standards are necessary for righting long-standing environmental and health injustices faced by fence-line communities, and this reconsideration process gives EPA an opportunity to directly address some of these inequities.

Millions of Americans are depending on EPA to protect their right to clean air, and we urge you to move quickly to finalize stronger, more protective standards, for both annual and short-term particle pollution.

Sincerely,

7 Directions of Service
Adirondack Council
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Appalachian Mountain Club
Appalachian Voices
ARTivism Virginia
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Bridging The Gap, Inc.
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Health
Change the Chamber
Chispa LCV
Citizens for Arsenal Accountability
Clean Air Task Force
Clean Water Action
CleanAirNow
Climate Action Alliance of the Valley
Climate Changemakers
Climate Crisis Policy
Coal River Mountain Watch
Coalition of Community Organizations
COIN Climate Energy and Environment
Common Defense
Downwinders at Risk
Earthjustice
EcoFaith Recovery
Elders Climate Action

Elected Officials to Protect America
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Evergreen Action
First Focus on Children
Friends of Buckingham
Friends for Environmental Justice
GASP
GreenLatinos
Health Resources in Action
Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah
Hispanic Access Foundation
Indivisible
Interfaith Power & Light
Ironbound Community Corporation
League of Conservation Voters
Loudoun Climate Project
Louisiana Bucket Brigade
Metropolitan Energy Center
Michigan Sustainable Business Forum
Missing Murdered Indigenous Women of North Carolina
Moms Clean Air Force
Mothers & Others For Clean Air
Mothers Out Front - Radford Regional
Mothers Out Front - Roanoke
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New Northside Missionary Baptist Church
New Virginia Majority
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
Oregon Environmental Council
Partnership for Policy Integrity
PennFuture
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition
Poder Latinx
Preserve Monroe
Preserve Montgomery County VA

Preserve Salem, VA
Protect Our Water Heritage Rights (POWHR)
Public Justice
Respiratory Health Association
Rise St. James
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
SouthWings
Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM)
Sunrise Movement
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services
The Green Door Initiative
Third Act Virginia
Tishman Environment & Design Center at The New School
U.S. PIRG
University of California at Berkeley
Unlimited Potential
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action
Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council
Washington Environmental Council/Washington Conservation Voters
Waterway Advocates
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
West End Revitalization Association (WERA)
Western Resource Advocates
WildEarth Guardians
WoodsmokeFreePDX
WyCo Mutual Aid
Yogaville Environmental Solutions

cc:

Joe Goffman, EPA
Tomás Carbonell, EPA
Rosemary Enobakhare, EPA
Matthew Tejada, EPA
Peter Tsirigotis, EPA
Brenda Mallory, Council on Environmental Quality
Gina McCarthy, Executive Office of the President
Ali Zaidi, Executive Office of the President
Candace Vahlsing, Office of Management and Budget