

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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69 Health and Other Groups Urge EPA to Save Thousands of Lives With Stronger Smog Standards

WASHINGTON, D.C., (October 27, 2010) – Sixty-nine organizations representing health, environmental, Latino and faith constituencies are urging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect public health by issuing strong standards for smog (ground-level ozone). Polluters and their allies are pushing heavily to block the standards, which would save as many as 12,000 lives and prevent tens of thousands of asthma attacks and heart attacks each year.

"It is critically important that EPA strengthen the ozone standard to protect millions of Americans who are currently exposed to unsafe levels of toxic ozone," said Charles D. Connor, President and CEO of the American Lung Association. "This is an important step towards safer and healthier air across the United States."

The standard is the official "limit" on ground level ozone air pollution—at a level that protects public health with an adequate margin of safety. The standard drives all the action to get rid of ozone air pollution, commonly known as smog, at the national, state and local levels.

Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that the smog standard must be much stronger to protect public health from serious harm. The Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, EPA's independent science advisors, reviewed the evidence from more than 1,700 studies of the health impacts of ozone. They concluded unanimously that the standard should be revised downward to between 60-70 parts per billion (ppb).

"Science should be our guide, and there's no doubt that adopting a stronger standard will protect health and save lives," said Georges C. Benjamin, MD, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association. "People with asthma, seniors, outdoor workers and especially children are at greatest risk. A stronger standard will help ensure that those who are most vulnerable are more adequately protected."

A strong ozone pollution standard will prevent life-threatening health effects. Ozone burns lungs and airways, causing them to become inflamed, reddened, and swollen. Children and teens, senior citizens, and people with lung diseases like asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and others are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of ozone. When inhaled even at low levels, ozone can cause chest pain and coughing, aggravate asthma, reduce lung function, increase emergency room visits and hospital admissions for respiratory problems, and lead to irreversible lung damage. Ozone can even cause premature death.

"Polluters are attacking the clean air laws that have saved tens of thousands of lives and prevented millions of cases of illnesses over the past 40 years," said Peter Lehner, Executive Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "The Clean Air Act has done a remarkable job of reducing pollution and protecting our health but there is more work to be done. Millions are suffering from asthma attacks and heart and lung disease. We need the EPA to follow the science and enact stronger standards to reduce the amount of smog we breathe."

The [ad](#) runs in The Hill today and in Politico on Thursday and reads as follows:

“It's our air, but big polluters treat it like they own it. They dump millions of tons of dangerous pollution into our air, threatening the health of all Americans.

Now they're also dumping millions of dollars into a lobbying war against America's clean air laws -- even as millions suffer from asthma attacks and other health impacts, especially the young and the elderly.

By setting stronger air quality standards for smog, the EPA can take a stand against big polluters and their lobbyists – and stand up for all Americans, including the most vulnerable.

Overwhelming evidence shows that stronger smog standards will save thousands of lives and prevent tens of thousands of respiratory emergencies each year. Why would anyone oppose that?

Administrator Jackson, we are counting on you to fight for our air so America's most vulnerable don't have to.”

The following 31 national organizations are listed on the ad running in The Hill and in Politico:

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Lung Association, American Public Health Association, Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Air Watch, Earth Day Network, Earthjustice, Environment America, Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Health Fund, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace USA, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, League of Conservation Voters, Mineral Owners for Responsible Action and Land Safety, National Alliance for Drilling Reform NA4DR, National Latino Coalition on Climate Change, National Parks Conservation Association, National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc., National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, NETWORK-A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Safe Climate Campaign, Sierra Club, The Center for the Celebration of Creation, Trust for America's Health, Union of Concerned Scientists, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth and Voces Verdes.

In addition, an ad with a complete list of all 69 national, state and local signers is available [here](#).

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About the American Lung Association:

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is "Fighting for Air" through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.LungUSA.org.

About the Natural Resources Defense Council:

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, non-profit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has more than 1.3 million members and e-activists nationwide, served from offices in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing. More information is available at www.nrdc.org.