

June 7, 2016

Dear Senator/Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members, the undersigned 118 organizations urge you to oppose the “Ozone Standards Implementation Act” (H.R. 4775, S. 2882). The innocuous-sounding name is misleading: this legislation would actually systematically weaken the Clean Air Act without a single improvement, undermine Americans’ 46-year right to healthy air based on medical science, and delay life-saving health standards already years overdue.

This bill’s vision of “Ozone Standards Implementation” eliminates health benefits and the right to truly safe air that Americans enjoy under today’s law. First, the legislation would delay for ten years the right to safer air quality, and even the simple right to know if the air is safe to breathe. Corporations applying for air pollution permits would be free to ignore new ground-level ozone (aka smog) health standards during these additional ten years. For the first time the largest sources of air pollution would be allowed to exceed health standards. The bill would also outright excuse the parts of the country suffering the worst smog pollution from having backup plans if they do not reduce pollution. The most polluted parts of the country should not stop doing everything they can to protect their citizens’ health and environment by cleaning up smog pollution.

This bill is not content to merely weaken and delay reductions in smog pollution. It also strikes at our core right to clean air based on health and medical science. The medically-based health standards that the law has been founded on for 46 years instead could become a political football weakened by polluter compliance costs. This could well result in communities being exposed to unhealthy levels of smog and soot and sulfur dioxide and even toxic lead pollution. The bill would also double the law’s five-year review periods for recognizing the latest science and updating health standards, which are already frequently years late; this means in practice that unhealthy air would persist for longer than ten years.

The legislation also weakens implementation of current clean air health standards. The bill expands exemptions for “exceptional events” that are not counted towards compliance with health standards for air quality, even when air pollution levels are unsafe. This will mean more unsafe air more often, with no responsibility to clean it up. Requirements meant to ensure progress toward reducing smog and soot pollution would shift from focusing on public health and achievability to economic costs. Despite the bland name “Ozone Standards Implementation Act,” this bill represents an extreme attack on the most fundamental safeguards and rights in the Clean Air Act.

Since 1970, the Federal Clean Air Act has been organized around one governing principle—that the EPA must set health standards based on medical science for dangerous air pollution, including smog, soot and lead, that protect all Americans, with “an adequate margin of safety” for vulnerable populations like children, the elderly and asthmatics. This legislation eviscerates that principle and protection. We urge you to oppose H.R. 4775 and S. 2882, to protect our families and Americans’ rights to clean air.

Sincerely,

350KC
350 Loudoun
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Alton Area Cluster UCM (United Congregations
of Metro-East)
Brentwood House

California Latino Business Institute
Center for Biological Diversity
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Chicago Physicians for Social Responsibility
Citizens for Clean Air
Clean Air Watch
Clean Water Action
Cleveland Environmental Action Network
Climate Action Alliance of the Valley
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
Conservation Voters for Idaho
Conservation Voters of South Carolina
Dakota Resource Council
Earth Day Network
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Environment Iowa
Environment America
Environment Arizona
Environment California
Environment Colorado
Environment Connecticut
Environment Florida
Environment Georgia
Environment Illinois
Environment Maine
Environment Maryland
Environment Massachusetts
Environment Michigan
Environment Minnesota
Environment Missouri
Environment Montana
Environment Nevada
Environment New Hampshire
Environment New Jersey
Environment New Mexico
Environment North Carolina
Environment Ohio
Environment Oregon
Environment Rhode Island
Environment Texas
Environment Virginia
Environment Washington
Environmental Defense Action Fund
Environmental Entrepreneurs
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Ethical Society of St. Louis
Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Florida Conservation Voters
Fort Collins Sustainability Group
GreenLatinos
Health Care Without Harm
Iowa Interfaith Power & Light
Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society
KyotoUSA
Labadie Environmental Organization (LEO)
Latino Donor Collaborative
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters
Maine Conservation Voters
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
Moms Clean Air Force
Montana Conservation Voters Education Fund
Montana Environmental Information Center
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
NC League of Conservation Voters
Nevada Conservation League
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New York League of Conservation Voters
Northern Plains Resource Council
OEC Action Fund
Ohio Organizing Collaborative, Communities
United for Responsible Energy
Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Partnership for Policy Integrity
PennEnvironment
People Demanding Action, Tucson Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine
Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Arizona
Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, SF Bay Area
Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Tennessee
Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Wisconsin
Chapter
Powder River Basin Resource Council
Public Citizen
Public Citizen's Texas Office
RVA Interfaith Climate Justice Team

Safe Climate Campaign
San Juan Citizens Alliance
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
Sustainable Energy & Economic Development
(SEED) Coalition
Texas Campaign for the Environment
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services
Texas League of Conservation Voters
The Environmental Justice Center at Chestnut
Hills United Church
Trust for America's Health
Union of Concerned Scientists
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
Valley Watch
Virginia Organizing
Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
Voces Verdes
Voices for Progress
Washington Conservation Voters
Western Colorado Congress
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Wisconsin Environmental Health Network
Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters
Wisconsin Environment
Wyoming Outdoor Council