



## ENERGY BILL = DIRTY AIR

### § 1443 WOULD UNDERMINE CLEANUP OF CODE RED AIR POLLUTION

***A "dirty air" clause, snuck in behind closed doors during conference, would allow a waiver of stronger anti-smog requirements in polluted cities that missed clean air deadlines.***

▶ The Energy bill would let some of the nation's most polluted cities get extended clean air deadlines without adopting stronger pollution controls. These cities could simply blame their problem on other communities, and do nothing more to clean up their own pollution.

▶ Smog presents a major health threat to children, senior citizens, and hundreds of thousands of people with respiratory diseases in these communities. In Washington, D.C., for example, ozone pollution reached unhealthy levels of 37 days in 2002, including two "code purple" days when the air was deemed "very unhealthy." The pollution was so bad that children were warned to limit outdoor play, and persons with lung ailments were warned to stay indoors.

▶ The bill would allow clean air delays in cities that are already years behind schedule in adopting stronger anti-pollution measures. It would allow weaker pollution controls in these cities than those already required in cities like Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Trenton, New York, Chicago, and Milwaukee - cities that also receive transported air pollution.

▶ Ozone is a severe lung irritant even to healthy adults, and causes chest pains, increased risk of infection, and significant decreases in lung function. By some estimates, in a typically smoggy summer in metro DC, breathing difficulties send more than 2,400 people to the emergency room and cause 130,000 asthma attacks.



*These pictures show the stark contrast between smoggy and clear days in Washington D.C.*

▶ Cities that might seek these extensions include Dallas, Houston, Beaumont TX, Baton Rouge, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. Moreover, the bill would actually let some cities weaken currently applicable anti-pollution mandates.

▶ Children, asthmatics and others in potentially affected cities face continued levels of ozone pollution that will put them at risk of asthma attacks, emergency room visits, lung damage, and other serious health impacts. These cities need stronger, not weaker, clean air protections, and need them now.

▶ The bill sets no fixed date, outside deadline for these cities to meet standards, once they get a waiver. They can wait until "the last reductions in pollution transport necessary for attainment in the downwind area are required to be achieved by the upwind area or areas." This will only encourage attempts by downwind areas to further delay stronger local pollution controls by claiming that yet more reductions are needed from upwind areas.

▶ The bill would extend its waiver scheme to implementation of EPA's new, more protective 8-hour ozone standard—which is just getting started. This will lead to an almost endless games of finger pointing, where states are constantly seeking to extend deadlines and avoid needed controls by saying that other states aren't doing enough to reduce pollution.



*The view from northwest Washington in summer shows downtown and the Washington Monument through thick smog.*

## SUMMER 2002 METRO DC'S OZONE RECORD

### CODE PURPLE: VERY UNHEALTHY

- ▶ Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease such as asthma, should avoid all outdoor exertion
- ▶ Healthy individuals should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion

**NUMBER OF DAYS IN 2002: 2**

### CODE RED: UNHEALTHY

- ▶ Children and the elderly should limit time outdoors
- ▶ Healthy individuals should limit strenuous outdoor work or exercise

**NUMBER OF DAYS IN 2002: 9**

### CODE ORANGE: UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS

- ▶ Sensitive individuals should limit prolonged or strenuous outdoor activities
- ▶ Those with respiratory or heart ailments should limit outdoor activities

**NUMBER OF DAYS IN 2002: 28**

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