



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2007

The Honorable Stephen L. Johnson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson:

We are writing in response to your June, 2007 proposal to strengthen the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ground level ozone pollution, or smog. In light of the urgent need to improve air quality to protect public health, we urge you to adopt a final rule that meets the unanimous recommendations of the Environmental Protection Agency's independent scientific advisors. Specifically, we ask you to issue a final rule that sets the eight hour average standard for ozone at no more than .060 to .070 parts per million (ppm).

The EPA's panel of expert science advisors, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), unanimously found that the smog standard "needs to be substantially reduced to protect human health, particularly in sensitive subpopulations," and that "there is no scientific justification" for retaining the current standard. CASAC called for an eight hour average ozone standard of .060 to .070 ppm. Experts on lung health, including the American Thoracic Society and the American Lung Association, are calling for a standard of .060 ppm given the strength of the scientific evidence.

The Clean Air Act requires air pollution standards to be set at a level that will "protect public health" with "an adequate margin of safety." Scientists have linked exposure to smog pollution with asthma attacks, lung damage, aggravated chronic lung disease, and premature death. Children, people with lung disease and the elderly are among those most susceptible to smog pollution, but even healthy adults display negative health effects when exposed to levels of ozone below the current standard of .080 ppm. Studies now show adverse effects in the lung occur at exposure levels as low as .060 ppm.

The positive impacts on the health of our citizens is compelling and we believe more than sufficient to warrant a substantial reduction in the current ozone standard. As an additional factor, it is interesting to note that studies have shown that there are large economic benefits to lowering the air pollution burden on public health and the environment. Smog pollution impedes economic activity through increased health care costs and premature death, absenteeism at work and school, lowered productivity, and reduced crop yields. On the other hand, many of the measures that reduce smog pollution have numerous co-benefits by lowering soot and other air pollution as well as the emissions of global warming gases.

Because of these policy considerations and the overwhelming scientific evidence in favor of a stronger smog standard, we ask you to issue a final rule that sets the eight hour average ozone standard at no greater than .060 to .070 parts per million.

Sincerely,

Edwards Smith

Jim Moran

Allyson J. Schwartz

Patrick J. Kennedy

Wil Ferguson

Adam P. Schiff

Betsy McCollum

Paul Fuchs

Keith Ellison

Jim McDermott

Patsy Murray

Clayton Kopp

Paul Lofgren

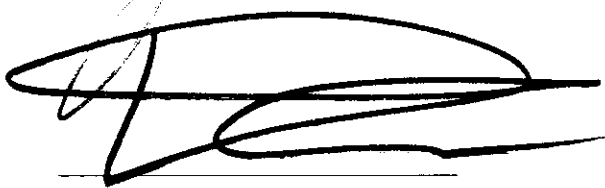
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