

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<sub>2.5</sub>) pollution of no higher than 8 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) for the annual standard and no higher than 25 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for the 24-hour standard. Setting tighter limits on harmful PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub> standard after the previous Administration chose to leave the outdated standard in place. A strong body of scientific and health evidence indicates that the current, outdated standard is not adequately protective of public health.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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> Further illustrating how widespread the PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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 µg/m<sup>3</sup> could avoid 19,000 premature deaths annually and prevent 46,000 emergency department visits for pediatric asthma.<sup>3</sup> EPA's mission is to protect public health and the environment, and

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

<sup>2</sup><https://www.lung.org/research/sota>

<sup>3</sup><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 frontline 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