

Americans for Clean Air

February 15, 2005

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chair, Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe:

For over three decades, the Clean Air Act has worked to improve public health and protect the environment. We, the undersigned health, seniors', religious, labor, civil rights, children's, parents', women's, consumer, environmental and conservation organizations strongly support the Clean Air Act and vigorously oppose legislation that would weaken or delay the implementation of the law.

The Clean Air Act Is Working

Through enforcement of its provisions, the Clean Air Act is working. Air pollution levels have dropped at the same time the nation's economy and population have grown dramatically. The Clean Air Act is designed to protect the health of all Americans including pregnant women, children, people with heart disease and lung diseases (such as asthma and emphysema), seniors, communities of color and other populations at risk for diseases like cancer. The act also protects America's National Parks and other unique landscapes from air pollution, haze and irreversible damage to the environment.

More Needs To Be Done

Current research has shown that air pollution, even at low concentrations, poses a greater threat to the life and health of children, people with heart and lung ailments, and the elderly than previously known. **Any changes to the Clean Air Act must reduce air pollution further and faster than the current act to protect these vulnerable people.** The Clean Air Act requires EPA to set strong standards that will cut pollution from power plants and other industrial sources to meet the health-based air quality standards for soot and smog. Power plants are required to sharply reduce their sulfur and nitrogen emissions by the end of this decade. Current law also requires power plants to install state-of-the-art technologies that will deeply cut mercury contamination by 2008.

First Do No Harm

The Clean Air Act amendments that you have introduced with the support of the Administration would disrupt clean air progress, harm public health and worsen global warming. Your air pollution proposal would weaken the Clean Air Act in several important ways. The bill would delay deadlines to meet the health standards and relax pollution reduction requirements for power plants and other major pollution sources. The proposal would repeal the requirement for power plants to make the maximum achievable reductions of toxic mercury emissions. Critical

states' authority to set stronger clean-up standards also would be repealed. The plan also would make global warming worse by allowing carbon pollution to increase.

The current Clean Air Act provides critical tools that the states and the Environmental Protection Agency can use to achieve clean air. Please do not weaken industry's responsibility to clean up power plants and other smokestacks. Do not postpone the requirements to meet health-based standards. Do not diminish the rights of downwind states to protect their citizens from pollution produced outside their borders.

All Americans have a right to breathe clean, healthful air. That is the promise of the landmark Clean Air Act. This promise should never be broken.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Environmental Human Rights
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Bottom Conservancy
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
BE SAFE
Breakthrough Technologies Institute
Center for International Environmental Law
Children's Environmental Health Network
Citizens Coal Council
Clean Air Task Force
Clean Air Trust Education Fund
Clean Air Watch
Clean Water Action
Clear the Air
Climate Solutions
Coalition for Clean Air
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Consumer Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Ecology Center
Environmental Defense
Environmental Defense Center
Environmental Integrity Project
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace USA

Healthy Schools Network, Inc.
International Primate Protection League
Justice and Witness Ministries, The United Church of Christ
Kids Against Pollution
League of Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens
League of Women Voters of the United States
Mothers for Clean Air
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Environmental Trust
National Parks Conservation Association
National Refinery Reform Campaign
Natural Resources Defense Council
Our Children's Earth
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Public Citizen
Science and Environmental Health Network
Service Employees International Union
Sierra Club
Trust for America's Health
Union of Concerned Scientists
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
U.S. Environmental Watch
Wildlands CPR
Women's Environment and Development Organization
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Working Assets
20/20 Vision

Cc. The Hon. James Jeffords, Ranking Member, Environment and Public Works Committee
Members, Environment and Public Works Committee