

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Mail code 1101A
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan:

We write to strongly express our support for strengthening the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) draft proposal on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particulate matter pollution (PM 2.5), also known as soot. We were pleased that EPA reconsidered the inadequate 2020 standards, and we urge you to finalize standards no higher than 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for the annual standard and 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for the 24-hour standard, which are in line with the recommendations of the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC).¹

Exposure to fine particle pollution causes a range of health issues, such as increased infant mortality, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, asthma attacks, diabetes, and premature death. The public health benefits that could be realized under an annual standard of 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ were estimated to total \$44,000-93,000 million annually.² Adopting the most stringent annual standard proposed by EPA - 9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ - saves 4,200 lives, but adopting the standard recommended by CASAC - 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ - saves more than twice that number in the year 2032.³ These health impacts disproportionately affect communities of color, fenceline communities, and lower-income communities who are already overburdened by pollution. People of color also face worse outcomes from exposure to air pollution and stand the benefit the most from stronger standards. EPA's own analysis shows that every other race compared to Whites would see greater mortality reductions with tighter standards. For Black Americans, mortality reductions are over double for a standard of 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ compared to 9.⁴

According to the American Lung Association, over 63 million Americans experience unhealthy particle pollution spikes and 20 million live with dangerous levels of particle pollution year-round. Further, recent research shows air pollution and its harmful impact on human health and the environment are increasing. The American Lung Association's 2022 "State of the Air Report" found 9 million more people were impacted by particulate matter from 2018-2020 than in the previous report.

It is critical that EPA strengthen both the annual and 24-hour standards. Both standards are necessary for adequately protecting public health. The 24-hour standard is the basis for the Air Quality Index, which millions of Americans rely on to know the quality of the air they breathe each day. An inadequate 24-hour standard, like the current 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, can mask short-term pollution spikes that are dangerous to millions of people such as children, the elderly, and people with cardiovascular and respiratory problems and pregnant people. Strengthening only the annual standard is not enough to protect communities from dangerous short-term pollution spikes.

Strengthening particle pollution standards will improve air quality from coast to coast and will start to address historic inequities and injustices in communities suffering from cumulative exposure to multiple pollutants. People

¹ U.S. EPA. CASAC Review of the EPA's Policy Assessment for the Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter (External Review Draft-October 2021), March 2022. EPA-CASAC-22-002.

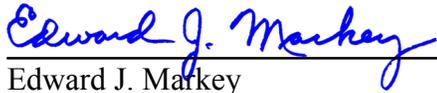
² U.S. EPA. Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Proposed Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter, December 2022. EPA-452/P-22-001.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

and their families have waited far too long to breathe healthy air. The science is clear and we urge you to move swiftly to finalize these standards so that we can finally begin to achieve the promise of clean air for everyone.

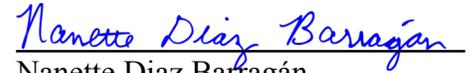
Sincerely,



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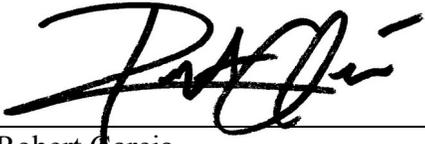
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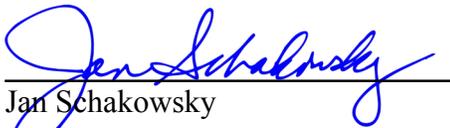
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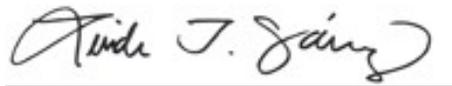

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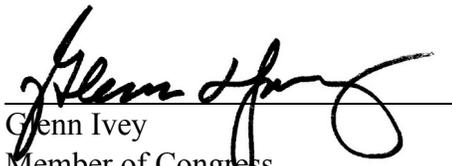

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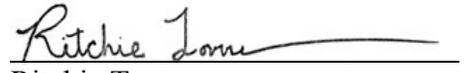
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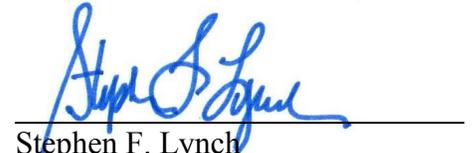


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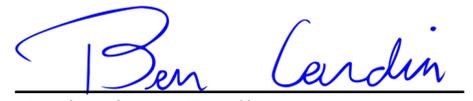

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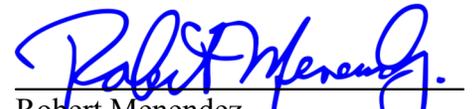

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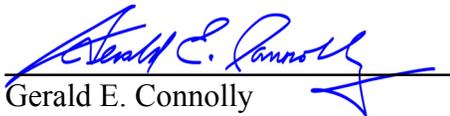
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