

Americans for Clean Air

May 7, 2003

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

The Honorable Billy Tauzin
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Chairman Tauzin:

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

The Clean Air Act is working. By enforcing the law, air pollution levels have dropped at the same time the nation's economy has grown dramatically. The Clean Air Act amendments that you have introduced at the request of the administration would disrupt this progress, harm public health and worsen global warming. If the Clean Air Act is changed, it should be strengthened, not weakened.

Today, the Clean Air Act is designed to protect the health of all Americans. Pregnant women, children, people with heart disease and lung diseases (such as asthma and emphysema), seniors and other populations at risk for diseases like cancer must be protected from the harmful effects of poisonous mercury in our waters, toxic air pollution, smog and soot. America's National Parks and other unique landscapes must be protected from air pollution, haze and irreversible damage to our environment.

The Clean Air Act sets strong standards to 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.

The Bush Administration's air pollution proposal weakens the Clean Air Act in several important ways. The bill delays deadlines to meet the health standards and relaxes pollution reduction requirements for power plants and other major pollution sources. The proposal repeals the requirement for power plants to install state-of-the-art pollution controls to reduce toxic mercury emissions. Critical states' authority to set strong clean-up standards is repealed. The plan also makes 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 themselves 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,

Alpha-1 Foundation
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Breakthrough Technologies Institute
Center for International Environmental Law
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Children's Environmental Health Network
Citizens Coal Council
Citizens for a Better Environment
Clean Air Task Force
Clean Air Trust Education Fund
Clean Water Action
Clear The Air
Climate Solutions
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)
Consumer Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental Defense
Environmental Defense Center
Environmental Integrity Project
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth
Green House Network
Greenpeace
Healthy Schools Network
International Primate Protection League
Kids Against Pollution
League of Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens
League of Women Voters of the United States

National Adult Day Services Association
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Association of the County and City Health Officials
National Audubon Society
National Consumers League
National Council on the Aging
National Environmental Trust
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
OMB Watch
Our Children's Earth Foundation
The Ocean Conservancy
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office
Public Citizen
Public Employers for Environmental Responsibility
Religious Action Forum
Sierra Club
Trust for America's Health
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society
United Steelworkers of America
US Environmental Watch
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
Wildlands CPR
Women's Environment and Development Organization
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Woman's National Democratic Club
Working Assets
20/20 Vision

CC. The Honorable Jim Jeffords
The Honorable John Dingell
The Honorable George Voinovich
The Honorable Tom Carper
The Honorable Joe Barton
The Honorable Rick Boucher