

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Vanessa Ramos, vanessa.ramos@sierraclub.org, (512) 586-1853

Larisa Manescu, larisa.manescu@sierraclub.org, (512) 964-7144

Matt Tresaugue, mtresaugue@edf.org, (713)-392-7888

Sierra Club and EDF Defend EPA Decision that San Antonio Does Not Meet Federal Smog Standards

Important Decision to Ensure Protections Put in Place to Restore Healthy Air

San Antonio, TX - Yesterday, Sierra Club and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) intervened in a lawsuit in defense of Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to declare San Antonio and Bexar County as "nonattainment," or out of compliance, with the federal health-based ozone (smog) standard.

Exposure to smog pollution is linked to asthma, reproductive and developmental disorders, and even premature death for seniors and people with respiratory illness. People in ozone-affected communities shoulder the expense of smog pollution through medical bills, sick children, and missed school and workdays. Bexar County is seeing [higher rates](#) of kids being hospitalized for asthma, even compared to historically high ozone areas like Dallas and Houston.

In July, EPA designated Bexar County as in nonattainment with the 2015 standard for ozone, which the agency strengthened in response to overwhelming evidence that a more protective standard was needed to protect public health. Full implementation of the ozone standard could prevent numerous deaths and thousands of hospitalizations each year in Bexar County. Instead of working with EPA to reduce the elevated levels of pollution in Bexar County – Texas is suing EPA to overturn the designation.

“San Antonio is suffering from a public health problem that requires more of Texas leaders than an irresponsible lawsuit. Bringing San Antonio’s air quality in line with these stronger safeguards will protect people’s health and save lives,” said Elena Craft, senior scientist at Environmental Defense Fund.

In an earlier filing, Sierra Club challenged EPA's decision not to include the surrounding counties that are clearly contributing to San Antonio's dirty air, including Comal County, Guadalupe County, and Atascosa County.

In response to that filing, Dr. Meredith McGuire, Trinity University Professor and Co-Chair of the Alamo Sierra Club Conservation Committee, released the following statement:

“While we support EPA's protections for Bexar County, it will be more challenging to fix the region's air quality problems without addressing harmful pollution from those surrounding counties. Unfortunately, real planning and strategies for reducing pollution can only happen once an area is designated as in nonattainment. There are big sources of pollution all around San Antonio that need to reduce harmful smog-creating pollution, not to mention the ever growing suburban population who live outside Bexar County but drive into the city for work and play. The Dallas and Houston area designations include surrounding counties and so should San Antonio.”

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About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.5 million members and supporters. In addition to helping people from all backgrounds explore nature and our outdoor heritage, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy and transportation, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.

About Environmental Defense Fund

Environmental Defense Fund (edf.org), a leading international nonprofit organization, creates transformational solutions to the most serious environmental problems. EDF links science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships. Connect with us on [EDF Voices](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).