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Air Pollution Makes Kids Sick:

WE NEED BETTER CLEAN AIR STANDARDS

AIR POLLUTION FROM COAL PLANTS and vehicles causes asthma attacks and makes us sick. Children and seniors are especially vulnerable to air pollution. Asthma affects one out of every ten school children in the United States, and is the number one illness that causes kids to miss school.¹

Coal pollution causes over \$100 billion in health costs and 12,000 emergency room visits every year. Half of U.S. families

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/school-based.html>

live in places where it is literally unsafe to breathe the air.²

Car pollution adds another \$40-\$60 billion in health costs.³ According to the American Lung Association, living near busy highways puts people at high risk for serious health problems, including asthma, heart disease, and cancer. A growing body of research finds that breathing the air near heavy traffic may cause new cases of asthma in children.

² <http://www.stateoftheair.org/>

³ http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/The_Toll_from_Coal.pdf

AIR POLLUTION MAKES US SICK

Even at very low levels, air pollution like smog and soot are harmful to human health. Especially harmful to children and seniors, air pollution like smog and soot can cause:

- Asthma attacks
- Reduced lung function
- Airway irritation and damage
- Increased risk of respiratory infections
- Permanent lung damage
(Scientists have compared exposure to smog pollution to getting “sunburned lungs”)
- Shortness of breath and chest pain
- Wheezing and coughing
- Increased hospitalization of people with lung diseases
- Premature death



WHAT ARE SMOG AND SOOT?

Smog is one of the most dangerous forms of air pollution. It's worse in the summertime because sunlight and hot weather accelerate its formation. This means that during their summer breaks, children need to restrict their outdoor activity because of seasonal “smog alerts” or “bad air quality days.” The pollution that forms smog comes mostly from coal-fired power plants, cars and trucks. Soot is a mix of metals, chemicals and acid drops. Burning dirty fuels like coal and diesel release dirty soot into the air, making us sick.

Children are at increased risk from exposure to smog because their lungs are still developing and they are more likely to be active outdoors.

CLEAN AIR MEANS A HEALTHY ECONOMY

Our communities are paying for the costs of air pollution with all these health problems. Study after study shows that to protect public health, we need to significantly lower the amount of air pollution in our air – and that means cleaning up dirty coal plants and vehicle pollution.

The good news is that clean air solutions are already available. Better public transportation options mean better commutes, more convenience and cleaner air. Electric cars and fuel-efficient vehicles are here today, and an average vehicle fuel efficiency standard of 60 miles per gallon is possible by 2025.

And while the latest technology can make huge improvements in cleaning up the air for our kids, we need the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to push for stronger standards.

In mid-2011, the EPA is expected to set new standards for smog and soot. If strong enough, these safeguards will protect human health, save billions of dollars in health costs, and create jobs for workers installing pollution controls on power plants and building better public transit systems.

Improving air quality standards to the range proposed by the EPA will also bring substantial economic and health benefits to America's local governments.

WE NEED STRONG SMOG AND SOOT PROTECTIONS FROM THE EPA

The EPA exists to enforce much needed safeguards to keep big polluters from making us sick. The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to protect Americans from life-threatening pollution.

Strong air quality safeguards from the EPA would help clean up major sources of pollution, protect public health, encourage cities and states to reduce the air pollution spewing from vehicle tailpipes, and increase investments in transportation choices.

With stronger pollution standards and clean transportation solutions, Americans will breathe easier.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.SIERRACLUB.ORG/ASTHMA