



June 28, 2016

To members of the Clean Air Act Advisory Committee:

The recent news in Portland Oregon of the discovery of industrial heavy metal toxic hot spots underscores the significant gap that still exists between current air emissions regulations and creating safe and livable cities in America. In fact, analysis of moss data conducted by US Forest Service researchers, brought to light what Senator Ron Wyden called the “lunar sized crater” that still exists in the regulations of most Hazardous Air Pollutants.

Our organization represents thousands of Oregonians all across the State, many of whom have suffered for years with adverse health effects associated with air pollution, including emissions of Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) from industrial sources and the deadly impacts from diesel exhaust.

While we appreciate that the State of Oregon and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have recently accepted what environmental and public health advocates have known for a much longer period of time – DEQ’s air toxics program, modeled on federal HAP’s regulations, is woefully inadequate to protect public health, safety and welfare. For far too long, DEQ has permitted industrial air emissions to place a significant number of Oregonians at an unacceptable health risk due to exposures to HAPs including heavy metals, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds, that are known to cause cancer, exacerbate asthma, and contribute to a host of other serious medical conditions.

Worse yet, we also know that the status quo forces communities of color and low-income communities to bear disproportionate health risks from both diesel engines and industrial air pollution, because industrial facilities, and the huge freight corridors that support and surround them, are often located in or adjacent to the very neighborhoods where these communities reside. These environmental justice communities frequently struggle with the most severe barriers to participating in the critical permitting decisions that ultimately affect the health of their children, elders, and the most vulnerable members of their community. Oregon’s air toxics crisis is a critical issue in terms of public health and social justice.

For this reason, we need more action from federal regulators to address the most significant risks to the most vulnerable people in our communities, and we support the recommendations of the EPA’s Air Toxics Workgroup, including:

1. EPA should request that the National Toxicology Program (NTP) evaluate the carcinogenicity of diesel exhaust, and update its monitoring protocols to give establish



credible methods for measuring diesel exhaust and spectating it from other black carbon sources.

2. EPA should develop a cumulative impacts policy that includes, but goes beyond, participation that results in reducing air pollution in EJ communities and overburdened communities. The EPA should use a screening tool that incorporates a cumulative impacts index to identify EJ communities and communities with high levels of cumulative impacts.

3. EPA should invest more resources to partner directly with communities, local government, tribes, states and business communities in a collaborative fashion on community air toxics strategies.

4. EPA should carry out its statutory obligation to review, revise and publish, as appropriate, the Clean Air Act (“CAA”) Section 112(b) (1) list of hazardous air pollutants (“HAPs”).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this very important issue.

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