



September 15, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our deep concern about efforts by Congress to undermine the Clean Air Act and Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mission to protect human health and the environment. We are also deeply disappointed that, at your direction, the EPA has postponed updating the Ozone standard, as required by law and supported by sound science. As the nation waits for the next opportunity to implement a health-based standard for Ozone, lives will be lost, related health care expenditures will continue to increase, and thousands will suffer from worsening chronic illnesses, such as asthma and other respiratory difficulties.

Nurses work every day with Americans that suffer from asthma, respiratory, cardiovascular and neuro-developmental diseases, all impacted by poor air quality. Children are particularly affected by air quality with an ever increasing incidence of asthma in children in this country. These diseases are often debilitating and, very often, fatal. It is our unique ability to actually see the link between poor air quality and human illness, especially in children, that leads to our profound distress about continued congressional attempts to limit the EPA's ability to protect the air we breathe from harmful pollution.

Despite the scientifically sound negative impacts of air pollution on public health, members of Congress have announced planned measures to further prevent improvements in air quality. As they continue to espouse rollbacks of health-protections on the pretense of helping the economy, these members ignore the work absenteeism, the health care premium costs, and the loss of productivity associated with the nation's epidemic of chronic illnesses, many of which are exacerbated by air pollution. Thus, blocking new ozone standards actually harms, rather than helps, the US economy, as it also harms our standard of living by fostering increased illnesses among our population.

Nurses, who have stood by you, are asking you to fully support the EPA in its efforts to enforce and expand on existing regulations intended to protect the nation's health. Establishing reduced ozone levels is first and foremost, a public health issue. Actions on

this issue should not be caught up in political partisanship nor confused with issues that seek to divert attention from the fact that air pollution results in lost days at school, lost days at work, lost productivity, increased health care costs and ultimately, loss of lives.

As nurses, we would be very interested in speaking to you directly about this issue. We would like to arrange a meeting with your office and representatives of our respective organizations to discuss how nurses can help support you in future efforts to reduce air pollution to improve our nation's health.

Very Respectfully Yours,

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