

July 12, 2022

The Honorable Tom Carper, Chairman  
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito:

**The undersigned organizations offer our enthusiastic support for reintroduction of the Public Health Air Quality Act and urge Congress to quickly pass this important legislation.**

**Unhealthy air is unjust and avoidable.** Across the country, the COVID19 pandemic has put a bright spotlight on the stark socio-economic inequalities and injustices in our country and systems. Generations of racism borne out in policy and planning have left many lower income households and Black and Brown neighborhoods in areas where the cumulative impact of multiple pollution sources undeniably causes increased rates of sickness and death. Toxic air pollution and criteria pollutants like ozone already harm children and the most vulnerable community members the most. Alarming but not surprisingly, emerging data and studies are making a clear link between dirty local air and higher rates of hospitalizations and death from COVID19. This is a problem we don't have to live with any longer because new monitoring and pollution controls are readily deployable, to provide vital information and to create jobs that will make our communities healthier and more livable.

**Information is the first step to health protection.** Existing EPA data shows there are dozens of facilities around the country emitting toxic pollution that contribute to higher than average risks of cancer and sickness in neighboring communities. Yet our nation has failed to ensure installation and maintenance of basic industrial safety infrastructure and processes, like air monitoring equipment and requirements that collected data be made readily available to the public. Air monitoring tied to EPA regulatory requirements is the key link to ensure that communities finally get essential health protection by providing the information necessary to ensure industrial sources find and finally clean up their pollution. EPA's Office of Inspector General has called attention to the problem of high health threats from toxic air pollutants like ethylene oxide and chloroprene that require urgent government action in 2021 and 2020 reports.<sup>1</sup>

**Communities have a right to know what's in our air.** One of the most critical action steps to guard communities from dangerous air pollution is to ensure that the best available, and wherever possible, real-time, state-of-the-art monitoring equipment is in place at facilities of concern in our local communities and neighborhoods. Our nationwide ambient air monitoring network has serious gaps and needs an immediate shot in the arm to add monitors and repair and maintain existing monitors, to better inform and protect our collective public health from deadly criteria pollutants like PM2.5 and ozone. The U.S. Government Accountability Office recently highlighted this serious problem and the need to modernize the U.S. air monitoring network in a 2020 report.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/office-inspector-general/report-epa-should-conduct-new-residual-risk-and-technology-reviews>; <https://www.epa.gov/office-inspector-general/report-management-alert-prompt-action-needed-inform-residents-living-near>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-38>.

Thank you for your thoughtful review and consideration of the Public Health Air Quality Act.

Sincerely,

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
California Communities Against Toxics  
Colorado Latino Forum  
Earthjustice  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Environmental Justice Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform  
Environmental Law and Policy Center  
GASP  
GreenLatinos  
Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN)  
Moms Clean Air Force  
Rio Grande International Study Center  
Sierra Club  
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (t.e.j.a.s.)  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice