

# Talking Points for the EPA Public Hearings on Particulate Matter

July 17, 2012 • Philadelphia

July 19, 2012 • Sacramento



**You can make the case for cleaner air. Tell EPA what you think. Here's how to comment:**

- **Speak at the Public Hearing on July 17 in Philadelphia or July 19 in Sacramento**

Each public hearing is scheduled from 9 AM to 9 PM (local time) with a break from 12:30 to 2 for lunch and from 6 to 7:30 PM for dinner. You will only be able to speak for 5 minutes, but you can leave behind longer, written comments. You don't have to stay for the entire time—just show up a bit before you're schedule to speak. You can then speak when you are called up to the table and leave when you are finished.

Email [Alan Rush](mailto:Alan.Rush@epa.gov) to schedule a time to speak at [rush.alan@epa.gov](mailto:rush.alan@epa.gov). Or call him at 202-564-1658.

#### **Location:**

Philadelphia: William J. Green Federal Bldg. 600 Arch St. Philadelphia, PA 19106. Phone: 215-813-2583.

Sacramento: California Air Resources Board, 1001 "I" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: 916-322-2990.

- **Send in written comments by August 31, 2012.**

Email comments to: [a-and-r-Docket@epa.gov](mailto:a-and-r-Docket@epa.gov). Be sure to put "Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2007-0492" in the subject line. Or use the American Lung Association's alert at <http://action.lung.org/sootstandard>.

Or mail comments to: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2007-0492, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail code 6102T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460. Please include a total of 2 copies.

Additional information is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/pm/actions.html#jun12>.

## **Essentials**

- **EPA must strengthen the national air quality standards for particulate matter in the air we breathe. The current standards fail to protect the health of millions of Americans, as the Clean Air Act requires.**
- **We support much tighter national air quality standards: an annual standard of 11 micrograms per cubic meter (11  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) and a 24-hour standard of 25 micrograms per cubic meter (25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) to protect the health of those most at risk-children, teens, seniors, and people with chronic lung diseases like asthma, people with cardiovascular diseases, diabetics and people with low incomes.**

If you can, tell a personal story about someone you know who suffers from asthma or another respiratory problem that is aggravated or worsened by air pollution. Or explain your concern about children in your family, older adults or those who work or exercise outdoors. All are at higher risk.

**Fine particle air pollution is deadly.** Particulate matter causes asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes and may cause lung cancer. Most critically, particulate matter cuts short the lives of tens of thousands of Americans every year.

**The law requires that standards must protect public health. Under the Clean Air Act, air quality standards must be set at levels that protect public health, with an adequate margin of safety.** The standards must be based solely on the health effects of particle pollution, as the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in 2001. The EPA failed to adequately protect public health in the 2006 standards, as the DC Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2009. The Court directed the EPA to set standards that do protect public health in this review.

**Overwhelming scientific evidence shows the devastating effects of fine particles at levels well below the current standards.** The evidence from more than 2,000 peer-reviewed studies demonstrates that particles can shorten life, cause illness, and increase the risk of hospital and emergency room admissions. Studies also show that these effects occur at levels well below the current standards, proving that they are too weak to protect public health.

**EPA must follow the science.** Since the latest scientific studies clearly show that the current National Ambient Air Quality Standards (the standards) for particle pollution fail to protect public health, EPA's independent science advisors unanimously recommended to EPA staff scientists that the administration substantially strengthen the standards to protect public health.

**The public has a right to know.** Since the overwhelming evidence shows that particle pollution at these levels can threaten the health of millions of Americans, the public deserves to know the truth about the risks in the air they breathe.

**Our most vulnerable citizens face the highest risk. Air quality standards must be strong enough to protect them.** The evidence shows that children and teenagers, older adults, people with lung disease, heart disease and diabetes face increased risk, as do low income people.

**There is no evidence that setting strong pollution standards hurts jobs.** Air quality standards define how much pollution needs to be cleaned up to protect public health. Public planning processes at the federal, state, and local levels then determine the most cost-effective ways to cleanup air pollution to meet the health-based standard.

**The Obama Administration should issue strong final standards for fine particle pollution that protect public health and comply with the law.** The administration should adopt an annual standard no higher than 11 micrograms per cubic meter and a daily standard no higher than 25 micrograms per cubic meter when it finalizes the standards in December.

**EPA must reject pressure from Big Oil and other industries to retain the current standard.** Retaining the current standard would ignore science and recklessly subject millions of Americans to unsafe levels of particle pollution.

**All Americans deserve to breathe clean air and are counting on EPA to deliver cleaner air in their communities.**

#### **For PEOPLE WHO ARE IN ONE OF THE AT RISK GROUPS**

If you can, tell a personal story about what living with your disease is like. Many people who don't have asthma or cardiovascular disease or diabetes don't know what it is like to face the challenges you know so well.

**As someone who has asthma,** I know what it feels like to have my chest get tight and fear whether I will get my next breath. I know how important having clean, healthy air is to me to breathe. People who suffer from asthma as I do face a higher risk of having to take medicine, miss work, or end up in the doctor's office, hospital or emergency room. I want EPA to set standards based on the science that can better protect my health.

**As someone who has heart disease,** I had no idea that the science showed that I faced higher risk of heart attack because the air I breathe. That particle pollution levels well below the current standards cause cardiovascular harm to people like me according to major studies from all around the nation. That's a bad problem, because I like exercising outdoors to get my heart into better shape. I want EPA to set strong, protective standards that are based on the research I need to protect my health.

#### **For PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18**

Eighty percent of children's lungs develop after they are born. Their lungs don't stop developing until the child is fully grown. Children like my son/daughter also spend lots of time outdoors, playing and exercising, perfect for them to grow healthier, but where they risk breathing in more particles than most adults. My child shouldn't have to risk his/her future health to stay inside to avoid breathing this dangerous pollution.

I don't want to have to tell my child to come back inside when pollution levels are high, but I will. Please strengthen the particle pollution standards so they can protect my child's lungs.

**For HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

If you can, tell personal story about a patient you treated who suffered from asthma or another respiratory or cardiovascular problem that is exacerbated by particulate matter.

**Particulate matter pollution threatens public health.** Agency staff scientists and the independent Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) went through a thorough, extensive review of the clinical, epidemiological and toxicological research available at the time.

As you know, the CASAC ozone panel included 23 leading air pollution researchers from the nation's top research universities and institutions. They included a balance of perspectives and a variety of scientific disciplines, including toxicologists, epidemiologists, exposure experts, engineers, physicians, and atmospheric scientists.

As they concluded, the scientific evidence developed since the last review strengthens the finding that exposure to PM 2.5 causes premature death, and the magnitude of the PM 2.5 mortality association may be larger than previously estimated.<sup>1</sup> Multiple new studies of large U.S. cohorts have shown consistent, repeated evidence that particulate matter causes premature deaths.

**The more we learn about particle pollution, the more we understand how dangerous it is.** The Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, EPA's independent science advisors, reviewed evidence from over 2,000 studies in the scientific research of the health impacts of ozone. They unanimously concluded that the current standards do not protect human health. The American Thoracic Society, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association and others have all called for more protective particulate matter standards.

**I concur with the consensus of the scientific and medical communities that EPA should strengthen the particulate matter standards to protect public health, as required by law.** EPA should adopt an annual standard of 11 micrograms per cubic meter, which is consistent with recommendations made by its own scientific advisors. I also support a much stronger 24-hour standard of 25 micrograms per cubic meter.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. [Policy Assessment for the Review of the Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards](#). April 2011. EPA-452/R-11-003. 2011 p. 2-19 through 2-26.