

May 7, 2003

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chair, Committee on Environment and  
Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Billy Tauzin  
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Chairman Tauzin:

For over three decades, the Clean Air Act has worked to improve public health and protect the environment. We, the undersigned health, senior's, religious, labor, civil rights, children's, parent's, women's, consumer and environmental organizations strongly support the Clean Air Act and vigorously oppose legislation that will weaken or delay the implementation of the law.

The Clean Air Act is working. By enforcing the law, air pollution levels have dropped at the same time the nation's economy has grown dramatically. The Clean Air Act amendments that you have introduced at the request of the administration would disrupt this progress, harm public health and worsen global warming. If the Clean Air Act is changed, it should be strengthened, not weakened.

Today, the Clean Air Act is designed to protect the health of all Americans. Pregnant women, children, people with heart disease and lung diseases (such as asthma and emphysema), seniors and other populations at risk for diseases like cancer must be protected from the harmful effects of poisonous mercury in our waters, toxic air pollution, smog and soot. America's National Parks and other unique landscapes must be protected from air pollution, haze and irreversible damage to our environment.

The Clean Air Act sets strong standards to cut pollution from power plants and other industrial sources to meet the health-based air quality standards for soot and smog. Power plants are required to sharply reduce their sulfur and nitrogen emissions by the end of this decade. Current law also requires power plants to install state-of-the-art technologies that will deeply cut mercury contamination by 2008.

The Bush Administration's air pollution proposal weakens the Clean Air Act in several important ways. The bill delays deadlines to meet the health standards and relaxes pollution reduction requirements for power plants and other major pollution sources. The proposal repeals the requirement for power plants to install state-of-the-art pollution controls to reduce toxic mercury emissions. Critical states' authority to set strong clean-up standards is repealed. The plan also makes global warming worse by allowing carbon pollution to increase.

The current Clean Air Act provides critical tools that the states and the Environmental Protection Agency can use to achieve clean air. Please do not weaken industry's responsibility to clean up power plants and other smokestacks. Do not postpone the requirements to meet health-based standards. Do not diminish the rights of downwind states to protect themselves from pollution produced outside their borders.

All Americans have a right to breathe clean, healthful air. That is the promise of the landmark Clean Air Act. This promise should never be broken.

Sincerely,

Alpha-1 Foundation  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Cancer Society  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Breakthrough Technologies Institute  
Center for International Environmental Law  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Citizens Coal Council  
Citizens for a Better Environment  
Clean Air Task Force  
Clean Air Trust Education Fund  
Clean Water Action  
Clear The Air  
Climate Solutions  
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)  
Consumer Action  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Environmental Defense  
Environmental Defense Center  
Environmental Integrity Project  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends of the Earth  
Green House Network  
Greenpeace  
Healthy Schools Network

International Primate Protection League  
Kids Against Pollution  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
National Adult Day Services Association  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of the County and City Health Officials  
National Audubon Society  
National Consumers League  
National Council on the Aging  
National Environmental Trust  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
OMB Watch  
Our Children's Earth Foundation  
The Ocean Conservancy  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office  
Public Citizen  
Public Employers for Environmental Responsibility  
Religious Action Forum  
Sierra Club  
Trust for America's Health  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society  
United Steelworkers of America  
US Environmental Watch  
U.S. Public Interest Research Group  
Wildlands CPR  
Women's Environment and Development Organization  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
Woman's National Democratic Club  
Working Assets  
20/20 Vision

CC. The Honorable Jim Jeffords  
The Honorable John Dingell  
The Honorable George Voinovich  
The Honorable Tom Carper  
The Honorable Joe Barton  
The Honorable Rick Boucher