

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2015

Administrator Gina McCarthy
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We commend the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for moving forward with an update to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, or smog. Exposure to ozone can make it more difficult to breathe, trigger coughing and more frequent asthma attacks, and cause long-term damage to the lungs. Research also indicates that ozone exposure may increase the risk of premature death from heart or lung disease. For these reasons, we are writing to express our strong support for a science-based standard of 60 parts per billion (ppb). Despite the tremendous success of the Clean Air Act, millions of Americans are still breathing unhealthy air. A strong smog standard of 60 ppb would drive investments in clean energy and public transit infrastructure, save taxpayers billions of dollars annually in health care costs, and save lives.

Research clearly shows that air pollution harms some communities more than others. Low income families and communities of color in particular bear a disproportionate share of the burden. A 2011 study by the Centers for Disease Control found that Latinos, Blacks, Asians and Pacific Islanders are more likely to live in areas where air pollution fails to meet national standards. Further, communities of color are more likely to lack access to adequate healthcare and experience higher levels of unemployment, compounding the situation for too many families.

The current George W. Bush-era standard of 75 ppb fails to protect public health, not only for low income families and communities of color, but also for other vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, people with breathing ailments like asthma, and outdoor workers. A strong standard of 60 ppb will reap tremendous public health benefits. It is supported by extensive scientific research and respected public health organizations such as the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, the American Thoracic Society, the American Public Health Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Clean air is a fundamental right currently denied to too many people. We urge the EPA to stay true to the science and seize this opportunity to finalize a strong smog standard that will protect Americans for generations to come. We look forward to working with the EPA to implement an updated standard and appreciate consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.

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Member of Congress

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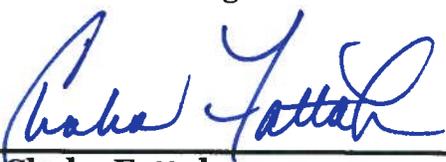
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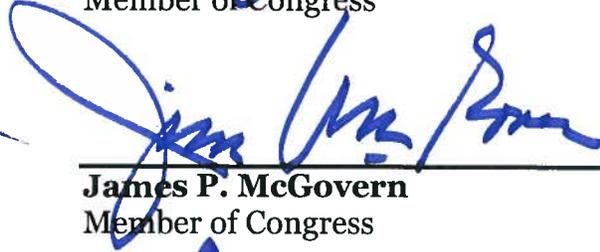
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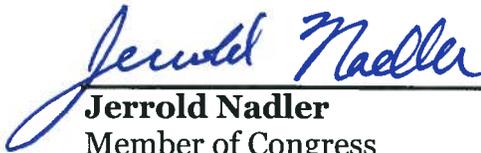
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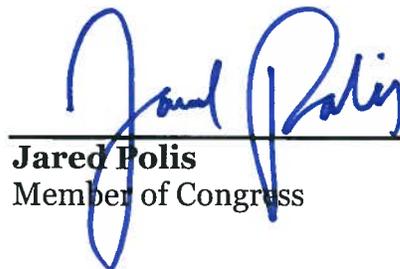
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