

**American Heart Association • American Lung Association • American Public Health Association • Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America • Health Care Without Harm • National Association of County and City Health Officials • Physicians for Social Responsibility • Trust for America's Health**

September 19, 2012

Dear Representative:

The undersigned public health and medical organizations strongly oppose H.R. 3409, the so-called "Stop the War on Coal Act of 2012." We urge you to vote NO on this breathtaking bill that blocks critical clean air safeguards and rolls back protections to public health. This bill would permit unabated threats from air pollution including: cancer, asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, emergency department visits, hospitalization and premature death. It is unconscionable that Congress would spend time on a bill that would inflict such harm.

With the passage of the Clean Air Act more than 40 years ago, Congress made a commitment that the air in the United States would be safe to breathe. This set our nation on a path toward safe, healthy air for all – including children, the elderly, and those with lung or heart disease. Thanks to that commitment, we have made tremendous progress.

H.R. 3409 would reverse this commitment. This misguided bill would further delay long overdue healthy air safeguards and let corporate polluters continue to spew toxic harm into communities across the nation. Specifically:

- H.R. 3409 (Title II) blocks efforts to reduce harmful pollution linked to rising global temperatures and continued risk from ozone smog – a well-known trigger of childhood asthma attacks. Scientists warn that the buildup of carbon pollution will create warmer temperatures, which will make it harder to clean up ozone. The harder it is to reduce ozone smog, the longer those with asthma and those with chronic health conditions must suffer difficulty breathing and asthma attacks that can send them to the hospital.
- H.R. 3409 (Title III) prolongs the exposure of millions of Americans to toxic air pollutants such as mercury, arsenic, formaldehyde, and acid gases, and allows dirty air to blow across state lines. Further, Title III indefinitely delays the long-overdue Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants finalized in December 2011, and halt efforts by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to limit "secondhand smog"--the pollution blown across state lines into downwind states. Any hope for these protections hinges on completion of an unnecessary and fundamentally flawed report to Congress on the costs of EPA clean air safeguards in various stages of development. EPA already assesses the costs and benefits of clean air safeguards, making their analysis available to Congress and the public.

HR 3409 is a brazen attempt to block these clean air protections, based on the flawed logic that protecting people from dangerous and deadly air pollution is not worth the investment. However, a rigorous, peer-reviewed analysis, *The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act from 1990 to 2020*, conducted by EPA, found that the air quality improvements under the Clean Air Act will save \$2 trillion by 2020 and prevent at least 230,000 deaths annually. The benefits of the Clean Air Act exceed the costs by more than \$30 for every \$1 in costs, according to that review, and may exceed the costs by as much as \$90 for every \$1 in investment.

With such dramatic consequences for public health and enormous costs from air pollution-related illnesses, we urge you to stand up to the pressure of big polluters and reject H.R. 3409 for what it is: a “war on lungs” that has no place at the top of Congress’ legislative agenda. House Leadership should stop trying to impede the efforts of scientists at EPA from protecting the health of our children, seniors and others with lung disease from air pollution that makes people sick and shortens the lives of thousands each year. Please vote NO on H.R. 3409.

Sincerely,

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

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National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)

Physicians for Social Responsibility

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