

**American Lung Association • American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America • Health Care Without Harm
National Association of County and City Health Officials**

April 13, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

Dear President Obama:

When the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed important safeguards to address harmful air pollution emitted from the production, processing, transmission and storage from the oil and natural gas industry, we and other leading medical and public health organizations applauded and urged strengthening changes. We urge you to stand strong against requests to weaken or delay the rule with loopholes and exemptions that would have dangerous impacts on public health.

The cleanup of air pollution from oil and natural gas wells is necessary and appropriate given EPA's charge under the Clean Air Act to protect public health from dangerous air pollution with a margin of safety. EPA's proposed standards are an important step towards reducing threats to public health from expanding oil and gas development and they are urgently needed as oil and natural gas production expands.

As professional health and medical organizations, we see irrefutable evidence of serious damage to human health from air pollutants emitted during oil and natural gas production, including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including air toxics such as benzene and formaldehyde, as well as increasing levels of ozone and particulate matter. These pollutants can worsen asthma, cause heart attacks, and harm the circulatory, respiratory, nervous, and other essential and vital life systems. They are also linked to cancer, developmental disorders, and even premature death. People most at risk of harm from breathing these air pollutants are depending on you to adopt these standards, including: infants, children and teenagers; older adults; pregnant women; people with asthma and other lung diseases; people with cardiovascular disease; diabetics; people with low incomes; and healthy adults who work or exercise outdoors.

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Natural gas production is expanding into highly populated areas of the country. The growth in oil and gas development across the nation means that many more people may be at risk from these pollutants unless EPA can provide strong, effective standards for reducing emissions of these pollutants. The adoption of the safeguards against air pollution from oil and natural gas production, as required under the Clean Air Act, will protect the public from life-threatening pollution. Limiting emissions from oil and natural gas production will yield tremendous benefits and significantly reduce adverse health effects. The nation needs the EPA to strengthen the oil and natural gas standards to effectively protect the health of those most at risk. The standards must be strengthened to keep up with the expansions and the new technology in the oil and gas industry. Your administration has a historic and momentous opportunity to clean the air of notoriously harmful pollutants that endanger human health.

We trust that you will resist last-minute pressure tactics from polluters seeking delays, loopholes and exemptions and reject any efforts to weaken these important public health safeguards.

Sincerely,

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