

American Heart Association ● American Lung Association ● American Public Health Association ● American Thoracic Society ● Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America ● National Association of City and County Health Officials ● Trust for America's Health

May 16, 2012

Dear Representative:

The undersigned public health and medical organizations write to express our strong opposition to HR 4471, which could appropriately be called the "GASP" or "Gutting Air Standard Protections" Act of 2012. We urge you to vote NO on HR 4471, which would block and delay important public health safeguards under the Clean Air Act. HR 4471 will not address rising gas prices, but it will **mean more smog, more childhood asthma attacks and other health impacts for people with lung and heart disease.**

HR 4471 indefinitely delays three overdue air quality safeguards, including standards for tailpipes emissions and gasoline sulfur content (Tier 3), air emissions standards for petroleum refineries and ground level ozone standards. **Most egregiously, the "GASP" Act (HR 4471) repeals the health premise of the Clean Air Act.**

In 1970, an overwhelming bipartisan majority in Congress agreed that to adequately protect public health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must set air quality standards to protect health with an adequate margin of safety. These standards are based on the best available health science. This system has worked for more than 40 years to let people know if the air is safe to breathe, and motivate action to improve air quality when it is not safe. EPA must retain this authority to establish health-based ambient air quality standards.

The Clean Air Act fully considers cost and feasibility in determining *how to meet* air quality standards. States and EPA consider these factors during the implementation process as strategies are implemented to meet air quality standards. Just as a doctor does not diagnose a patient based on the cost of treatment, EPA should not determine whether the air is safe to breathe based on how much it costs to reduce air pollution.

The Clean Air Act is one of the nation's premier public health laws. Since its establishment in 1970, the aggregate emissions of criteria air pollutants decreased 71%, while Gross Domestic Product increased 210%. Given the enormous contribution of the Clean Air Act to public health, we urge you to reject all efforts to weaken and delay it. Please vote NO on HR 4471.

Sincerely,

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