

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

July 26, 2013

Dear Representative:

The undersigned health organizations write to express our strong opposition to Rep. Bill Cassidy's Energy Consumers Relief Act of 2013 (H.R. 1582) that strips away the fundamental promise of the Clean Air Act for all who live in America today – the right to breathe air without harmful pollution known to trigger costly illnesses and even cut short lives. H.R. 1582 would have sweeping impacts for millions of Americans living with lung disease, heart disease and other chronic diseases.

The Clean Air Act is a success story, with a proven track record of saving lives and improving public health for millions of Americans across the country. People living with heart disease, asthma, allergies, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are especially vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. So are children, seniors, and those who work or exercise outdoors. These individuals and others rely on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fulfill its mission to protect public health and the environment, unhampered by the burdensome delays and duplicative analyses called for in this legislation.

We strongly oppose putting the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in charge of evaluating and approving public health safeguards advanced by the EPA. Creating redundant layers of bureaucracy would unnecessarily slow – and likely grind to a halt – future life-saving actions needed to protect the public from dangerous air pollution. EPA already conducts a thorough cost-benefit analysis for proposed public health and environmental safeguards. Their analyses consider impacts on jobs and energy prices as well as lives saved and illnesses avoided. DOE and other federal agencies participate in the interagency review process as required by Executive Order 12866, which also provides for public review and comment on all proposed regulations before they are made final.

Most egregiously, H.R. 1582 would not only delay public health safeguards, but expressly gives the Department of Energy authority to permanently block EPA protections regardless of the health benefits to be gained from these public health safeguards.

EPA protections help strengthen our nation and improve health. In fact, a rigorous, peer-reviewed analysis, *The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act from 1990 to 2020*, 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. Clearly the benefits of reduced pollution consistently far outweigh the costs.

Without a public health cop on the beat, more people will get sick and die from air pollution. **Please oppose efforts to take the EPA pollution cops off the beat, including H.R. 1582.**

Sincerely,

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