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**Testimony of Lyndsay Moseley Alexander
Assistant Vice President & Director, Healthy Air Campaign
American Lung Association
to the
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the proposed
National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone
Arlington, TX**

January 29, 2015

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of a stronger, National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Ozone.

My name is Lyndsay Moseley Alexander. I am the Assistant Vice President and National Healthy Air Campaign Director for the American Lung Association. The American Lung Association is the nation's oldest voluntary health organization. Our mission is to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease.

Strengthening the ozone, or smog, standard to the most protective level recommended by scientists would bring about significant decreases in asthma attacks, coughing and wheezing, cardiovascular harm, missed school and work days, and more.

When smog triggers asthma attacks that send children and adults to the emergency department, the sad truth is that some of them never make it home.

Newer evidence warns that inhaling dangerous smog worsens heart disease, causes harm to the central nervous system, and increases the risk of low birth weight in newborns.

With health risks like these, it is no wonder that during this public comment period you will hear from doctors, nurses and other health professionals – as well as parents concerned for their children's health. Around noon today, we will hear from Tyler, a 12 year-old boy with asthma who wants you to understand how it feels when he struggles to breathe on bad air days. You will also hear from his mom, about how frightening it is to rush him to the hospital.

I urge you to listen to these stories, remember their faces. These are the people Congress had in mind when they wrote and passed the Clean Air Act.

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I also urge you to listen to the scientists. The Clean Air Act requires you to set air quality standards that protect health, with a margin of safety; and keep those standards up to date with regular scientific reviews. When the independent health experts on the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee wrapped up their most recent review of more than 2,000 – they concluded unanimously that the current standard of 75 ppb is woefully inadequate and must be strengthened.

The scientific message was clear that you must set a standard between 60 and 70 ppb. But more specifically, I call your attention to this comment: **“the recommended lower bound of 60 ppb would certainly offer more public health protection than levels of 70 ppb or 65 ppb and would provide an adequate margin of safety.”**¹

Based on the scientific evidence and the requirements of the law, the American Lung Association strongly urges EPA to adopt the most protective standard recommended by the scientists of 60 ppb. By EPA’s own analysis, a standard set at 60 ppb will prevent up to 7,900 premature deaths, 1.8 million asthma attacks in children and 1.9 million missed school days each year.

Congress wisely required EPA to set air quality standards with one purpose: to protect public health, with an adequate margin of safety. This clear intent of Congress – that the standard be set based on the health protection – has been affirmed by a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court. The “health-based” standard is a corner stone of the Clean Air Act grants every person in this room and across the nation the right to know the truth about the air we breathe.

To set the standard based on any other criteria– such as cost or feasibility – is not only illegal, but would result in a standard that misleads the American people and provides a false sense of security that the air we breathe is safe, when clearly it is not.

With a more protective smog standard, the sky is not falling, as some might seem to claim today. On the contrary, the sky is clearing. And American families across the nation will breathe easier.

On behalf of the American Lung Association, I urge you to heed the scientific consensus, follow the law, and deliver the long overdue protections the public deserves. Anything less shortchanges our health and the health of our children.

Thank you.

¹ Letter from Dr. H. Christopher Frey, Chair Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee to The Hon. Gina McCarthy, Administrator U.S. Environmental Protection Agency June 26, 2014
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