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Public Health
Association



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America



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NACCHO
National Association of County & City Health Officials

March 7, 2012

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the undersigned public health and medical organizations, we write to state our strong opposition to the amendment (SA 1660) offered by Sen. Susan Collins to the Surface Transportation Act (S. 1813) that would hinder the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ability to protect public health. Sen. Collins' amendment would weaken and delay implementation of lifesaving Clean Air Act standards to reduce mercury and other toxic air pollution from industrial boilers and incinerators. These industrial boilers burn coal, natural gas, fuel oil, and biomass and emit toxic pollutants (mercury, cadmium, formaldehyde, acid gases, dioxins, furans, polycyclic organic matter) that can: damage the eyes, skin, and breathing passages; harm the kidneys, lungs, and nervous system; potentially cause cancer; impair brain development, neurological function, and the ability to learn; cause respiratory and cardiovascular disease; and kill.

Rolling back Clean Air Act protections by attaching SA 1660 to the Surface Transportation Act (S. 1813) would needlessly expose the public to unsafe levels of toxic air pollution that can make people sick or kill them. According to the EPA, reducing emissions from industrial boilers and incinerators alone will save up to 8,100 lives each year. It will also annually prevent 5,100 heart attacks and more than 52,000 asthma attacks. Each year of delay of these standards means more lives lost, more sickness, and more days lost from work or school.

The Clean Air Act protects public health and reduces health care costs for all by preventing thousands of adverse health outcomes, including cancer, asthma attacks, strokes, heart attacks, emergency department visits, hospitalizations and premature deaths. 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.

Therefore, we ask you to support full implementation of the Clean Air Act and resist any efforts to weaken, delay or block these vital public health protections. Please reject SA 1660 to the Surface Transportation Act (S. 1813).

Sincerely,

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