

Statement of Kesaaraa Wijeyewickrema
On behalf of the
American Lung Association
RE: Tier 3 Motor Vehicle Emissions and Fuel Standards Program
Docket ID NO. EPA-HQ-OAR-2011-0135

Good afternoon. I am Kesaaraa Wijeyewickrema, Manager of the Clean Vehicles and Fuels Program at the American Lung Association. For over 100 hundred years, the American Lung Association has been working to protect healthy lungs and healthy air. We believe that every American has the right to breathe clean and healthy air, and although we've made progress in the U.S., largely due to the Clean Air Act, millions of Americans remain at risk from air pollution.

One of the most cost-effective tools we have available to clean up air pollution is the proposed cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards. For about one penny per gallon of gas, we can save thousands of lives each year.

That's why the American Lung Association and our partners including the American Heart 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, and Trust for America's Health sent the President a letter supporting cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards in January of this year, and that is why I am here today.

We applaud the EPA's efforts to cut life-threatening tailpipe pollution and urge you not to delay in finalizing these standards because millions of Americans remain at risk. Tailpipe pollution can be most toxic within 300-500 meters of a busy roadway and can cause harm to lung and heart health. A 2010 survey of existing research by the Health Effects Institute, also found evidence suggestive of a causal link between traffic pollution and the onset of childhood asthma, non-asthma respiratory symptoms, impaired lung function, total and cardiovascular mortality, and cardiovascular morbidity.

While our most vulnerable populations to tailpipe pollution are children, older adults, those with existing conditions such as asthma, reduced lung function, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease and diabetes, tailpipe pollution endangers all people.

It's not just those of us who live, or go to school or work near busy roadways that are affected by traffic pollution. Particulate matter, deadly pollution that is formed in the atmosphere from tailpipe emissions, can stay suspended in the atmosphere for days or weeks because of their small size. These small particles can be transported into nearby neighborhoods or even hundreds of miles away, affecting people in neighboring cities and states.

Cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards will reduce particle, or soot pollution, as well as ozone or smog pollution. The health benefits of the proposed cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards are great. In January, the American Lung Association released a bi-partisan poll that found an overwhelming majority, 62 percent to 32 percent, of Americans support cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards.

The American Lung Association urges you to finalize these standards immediately so that all Americans can benefit from healthier air. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards today.