

PUBLIC POLICY POSITION

POSITION TITLE: Energy
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Policy Principle on Energy

The use of energy is essential to the growth and functioning of the U.S. economy and for the quality of life enjoyed in the United States. However, certain energy practices, fuel sources and technologies place a heavy toll on human health and the environment, impacting the lives of millions of - people, including those who are most vulnerable to harm. The American Lung Association strongly supports measures to prevent lung disease, reduce the incidence and exacerbation of lung disease. The American Lung Association believes that protection of lung health and a sound U.S. energy policy are compatible goals that require an emphasis on energy conservation, energy efficiency, and the use of cleaner energy resources, including a transition from coal and oil to cleaner alternatives. Our overarching principles call for the implementation of effective air quality programs and standards, transitioning to a clean energy future, with a commitment to promote [environmental justice](#).

Promoting Effective Air Quality Programs and Standards

To ensure the protection of human health, the American Lung Association supports the rigorous enforcement of air pollution regulations, and the strengthening of air quality standards and abatement requirements. The American Lung Association believes that all energy production facilities should use state-of-the-art pollution control technologies to protect public health and the environment. All facilities should meet the same rigorous standards of environmental performance, including both new and existing facilities.

Transitioning to a Clean Energy Future

The American Lung Association supports state and federal policies that will drive the deployment of the cleanest and most fuel-efficient energy resources and technologies. Such policies should promote the use of non-combustion renewable energy, low carbon fuels (measured on a lifecycle basis), expanded transmission and smart grid technologies, alternative forms of transportation, and energy storage. These programs and policies may include financial incentives, funding for research and development, and other measures to accelerate the deployment of alternative energy technologies.

The American Lung Association recognizes that tradeoffs may be inherent in the choice of alternative energy technologies and the need for clean, reliable, and cost-effective energy supplies. The American Lung Association supports steps to minimize the potential harm to human health inherent in these tradeoffs.

Focusing on Environmental Justice

The American Lung Association supports the protection of all people from the harm of air pollution, especially those who suffer disproportionate exposure from local sources of emissions. The American Lung Association recognizes that energy and transportation sources of air pollution are often located near where many people, especially communities of color or lower income, live and work, which means their exposure to pollutants emitted can be more immediate and disproportionately harmful. The American Lung Association recognizes that, for many reasons, people in those communities also face a greater burden of lung disease, making them even more vulnerable to these pollutants.

The American Lung Association recognizes that many factors have contributed to the disproportionate levels of exposure in these communities, including missing or weak limits on emissions, poor enforcement of existing regulations, inadequate monitoring of pollutants and limited scientific research. The American Lung Association supports the formulation, execution and enforcement of health and environmental laws and policies to address these factors, clean up contributing sources and reduce such exposures. As the nation transitions to cleaner sources of electricity, disproportionately burdened communities should be prioritized for clean-up.

The American Lung Association supports regular, thorough assessments of the impacts to nearby communities of sources of dangerous air pollutants, including highways, ports, industrial boilers, power plants, and other sources of air pollution. The American Lung Association supports the aggressive targeting of these sources for cleanup. The American Lung Association will work to reduce the disproportionate health burdens borne by economically disadvantaged and politically disenfranchised communities.

Oil and Gas Extraction

The American Lung Association supports strict regulations to protect public health and safety from the impacts of oil and gas extraction. The American Lung Association supports protective regulations and state-of-the-art pollution controls, including leakage detection and emissions monitoring, throughout the entire system during the exploration, extraction (including hydraulic fracturing), production, transmission, transport, refining and use of oil and natural gas. The American Lung Association supports continued research to identify the impacts on lung health and to identify improved pollution control measures to protect public health and safety, particularly the health and safety of workers and communities affected by these activities. The American Lung Association supports measures to improve the health and safety of neighboring communities and workers in the oil and natural gas industry, including during exploration, extraction (including hydraulic fracturing), production, transmission, transport, refining and use of the fuels. The American Lung Association opposes preemption of the authority of states or local governments to establish more stringent safeguards of public health and the environment.

Policy Principle on the Electricity Sector

The production of electricity in the United States generates a significant share of the nation's air pollution, threatening the health and lives of millions of people, including those who are most vulnerable to harm. Coal-fired power plants, in particular, pose a significant threat to air quality and human health. The American Lung Association supports strict enforcement of power plant air pollution regulations to ensure continuous compliance and the strengthening of abatement requirements to ensure the protection of human health. The American Lung Association supports public policies to minimize the human health, particularly lung health, impacts associated with the production of electricity from fuel extraction to electricity delivery and disposal of wastes. No community should continue to bear the burden of air pollution levels that harm public health.

Energy Efficiency and Customer-Sited Energy Resources

The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to significantly reduce demand for energy by increasing the efficiency of U.S. homes and businesses, strengthening appliance standards, and reducing the energy consumption of consumer products. The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to encourage consumers and utility companies to expand investment in energy efficiency and energy conservation measures to reduce air pollution emissions, to reduce household energy expenses, and to stimulate new economic opportunities and job creation. The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to encourage energy efficient design and construction of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings while protecting indoor air quality. The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to encourage the development, deployment and integration of clean, non-combustion alternative technologies in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. The American Lung Association particularly supports the promotion of technologies that provide energy from non-combustion sources located onsite, such as rooftop solar and ground source heat pumps.

Coal-based Electricity

The American Lung Association supports the phase out of conventional coal-fired power plants as the nation transitions to a clean energy future. This includes support for policies that: (1) require the installation and operation of state-of-the-art air pollution control technologies and (2) encourage conversion to cleaner energy resources and/or permanent retirement of coal-fired power plants. The American Lung Association opposes the construction of new conventional coal-fired power plants. The American Lung Association believes that the U.S. should not continue to expand its coal-fired generating capacity because of the extensive scope of health risks associated with the use of coal and the disproportionate impact on local communities. As part of the transition to a clean energy future, the American Lung Association supports providing assistance to retrain coal industry workers and to help impacted communities transition to other economic opportunities. The American Lung Association supports measures to improve the health and safety of coal mine workers, and the communities where they live, including protection from harmful air pollutants.

Advanced Coal-based Electricity Technologies

The American Lung Association does not support the construction of new advanced coal-based generating facilities, including carbon capture and sequestration and integrated gasification combined cycle plants.

Natural Gas-based Electricity

The American Lung Association supports public policies requiring the installation and operation of state-of-the-art pollution control systems, including leakage detection and emissions monitoring, at new and existing natural gas-fired power plants. The American Lung Association supports systems, equipment and policies to protect public health and safety, air, water, and other environmental resources during the exploration, extraction (including hydraulic fracturing), production, transmission and use of natural gas.

Nuclear Electricity

Before nuclear generating capacity is expanded, the American Lung Association believes that two key thresholds must be met. First, the expansion of capacity must be economically viable without direct government subsidies. Second, the nuclear industry must demonstrate that it can reduce the continuing risks to safety and the environment. The American Lung Association supports measures to improve the health and safety of uranium mine workers, and the communities where they live, including protection from harmful air pollutants.

Non-Combustion Renewable Electricity

The American Lung Association supports policies and incentives that will encourage the development and deployment of clean, renewable energy resources that are not combustion-based, including, but not limited to, wind, solar and geothermal. The American Lung Association supports reforms to transmission and distribution policies that will encourage the expansion and delivery of clean, renewable, non-combustion energy resources. The American Lung Association supports additional research and development of advanced technologies that facilitate the expanded use of renewable energy, including improvements to energy storage capabilities. The American Lung Association supports improving the efficiency and output of existing hydroelectric power facilities.

Biomass Combustion for Electricity

The American Lung Association does not support biomass combustion for electricity production, a category that includes wood, wood products, agricultural residues or forest wastes, and potentially highly toxic feedstocks, such as construction and demolition waste. Burning biomass can emit recognized air pollutants, including particulate matter and other carcinogens, which cause premature death and endanger respiratory health. If biomass is combusted, state-of-the-art pollution controls must be required.

Electricity from Waste

The American Lung Association does not support incineration of municipal solid waste or other waste for electricity production. The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to reduce the health and environmental impacts associated with refuse disposal by: first, reducing the use of materials in production, packaging and purchasing; second, reusing materials whenever possible; and third, recycling or composting as much of the remainder as possible. The American Lung Association urges the use of safe non-combustion alternatives to dispose of all remaining waste. If waste materials are combusted, state-of-the-art pollution controls must be required. The American Lung Association supports the safe control of emissions from landfills and composting facilities, and recommends that only clean vehicles, equipment, and vessels be used transporting and managing solid waste materials.

Emissions Trading

Emissions trading and averaging can create disproportionate impacts on local communities. The American Lung Association favors a transition to enforceable pollution reduction obligations for all facilities.

Policy Principle on the Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Sectors

The combustion of fossil fuels and biomass in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors in the United States generates a significant share of the nation's air pollution, threatening the health and lives of millions of people, including those who are most vulnerable to harm. The American Lung Association supports public policies to minimize the human health, particularly lung health, impacts associated with the production of heat for residential, commercial, and industrial use, including impacts from fuel extraction to the disposal of wastes. The American Lung Association supports regulation and enforcement to protect the air, water and other environmental resources during the exploration, extraction, production and transmission of natural gas, propane, and oil. The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to assist communities and individuals to reduce their exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollutants and to reduce their energy use.

Residential and Commercial Fuel Combustion

The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to encourage a transition from fossil fuel and biomass use in the residential and commercial sectors to cleaner alternatives. The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to reduce the sulfur content of heating oil, including the use of biofuel blends. The American Lung Association opposes the use of unvented heating appliances and stoves in homes and businesses because of the dangers to human health indoors.

Residential Wood and Other Biomass Combustion

The American Lung Association recognizes that pollution from the combustion of wood and other biomass sources poses a significant threat to human health, and supports measures to transition away from using these products for heat production. The American Lung Association calls for effective enforcement of existing laws and regulations governing the combustion of wood and other biomass sources, as well as the expanded regulation of air pollution emissions from these sources. In particular, the American Lung Association calls on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to review and strengthen its certification standards for woodstoves and other wood-burning devices every eight years as required by the Clean Air Act. The American Lung Association encourages individuals to avoid burning wood in homes where less polluting alternatives are available, and supports programs to replace residential woodstoves with cleaner heating options, particularly for low-income persons. The American Lung Association strongly opposes the combustion of wood and other biomass sources at schools and institutions with vulnerable populations. The American Lung Association strongly opposes the use of outdoor wood-fired boilers for heating and other purposes, and supports measures to greatly reduce emissions from or eliminate outdoor wood-fired boilers. The American Lung Association recommends continuing research on the health effects of burning wood and other biomass sources, and the technologies to reduce the emissions associated with the combustion of these fuels.

Industrial Fuel Combustion

The American Lung Association supports public policies requiring the installation and operation of state-of-the-art air pollution control systems at new and existing industrial facilities, such as pulp mills, steel mills, and manufacturing facilities. The American Lung Association strongly supports policies that encourage a transition from coal, oil, and biomass use in the industrial sector to cleaner alternatives. If conversion in the short-term is not possible, the American Lung Association supports public policies that require the installation of state-of-the-art air pollution control systems, and on-going measures to ensure strong enforcement and continuous compliance.

Policy Principle on the Transportation Sector

The transportation sector in the United States generates a significant share of the nation's air pollution, threatening the health and lives of millions of people, including those who are most vulnerable to harm. The American Lung Association supports measures to significantly reduce the air pollution caused by cars, trucks, and other mobile sources. The American Lung Association supports regulation and enforcement to protect the air, water and other environmental resources during the exploration, extraction, production and transmission of transportation fuels.

The American Lung Association supports programs and policies to assist communities and individuals to reduce their exposure to mobile-source air pollutants. The American Lung Association recognizes that many communities and workers are disproportionately exposed to emissions from transportation sources, at least in part because they live and work on or near these sources.

The American Lung Association supports stringent, technology-forcing measures to reduce emissions from mobile sources through the use of: (1) advanced low- or zero-emission vehicle technology; (2) low-polluting alternative fuels; and (3) pollution control equipment and efficiency measures to further reduce emissions from existing vehicles. The American Lung Association supports reducing the sulfur levels in all gasoline, diesel, aviation, and marine fuels, and toxic air pollutants from all mobile sources.

The American Lung Association supports improved federal, state and local policies, planning and funding measures that reduce mobile-source emissions through sustainable community planning and development. The American Lung Association supports programs to reduce transportation energy use and to provide greater transportation alternatives.

Cars, Trucks, and SUVs

The American Lung Association supports stringent federal or California tailpipe emissions standards and fuel economy standards for cars, trucks and SUVs to reduce conventional air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The American Lung Association also supports California's ability to adopt stricter pollution regulations for vehicles and fuels, and supports the right of other states to adopt California standards. The American Lung Association supports vehicle inspection and maintenance programs, particularly on-road testing, and anti-idling programs to ensure low emissions throughout the vehicle life. The American Lung Association supports rigorous testing of vehicles by EPA, California and other states to ensure that vehicle emissions are adequately measured and controlled.

Heavy-Duty Vehicles and Equipment

The American Lung Association supports strengthening emissions standards for on-road and non-road heavy-duty engines and fuels, including those used in trucks; construction, agricultural, and industrial equipment; and rail and marine applications. The American Lung Association supports stringent greenhouse gas and fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty vehicles. The American Lung Association supports vehicle inspection and maintenance programs for heavy-duty diesel vehicles to ensure low emissions throughout the vehicle life. To reduce the impact of in-use heavy-duty vehicle and engines, the American Lung Association supports measures to reduce or eliminate engine idling, including school system anti-idling policies, truck-stop and port electrification, and the use of auxiliary power units to supply overnight heating, cooling, and other driver amenities for sleeper-cab equipped long haul trucks.

The American Lung Association supports programs and measures to reduce emissions from the existing fleet of on-road and non-road heavy-duty vehicles and engines. Such programs and measures include (1) requirements that publically-funded projects mandate that all diesel construction equipment be retrofitted with the best available technology to reduce particulate emissions; (2) continued funding and implementation of EPA's Diesel Emission Reduction Program and similar state-based diesel emission reduction programs; and (3) incentives to accelerate fleet turnover, in which vehicles and parts are properly recycled or scrapped.

Transportation Alternatives

The American Lung Association supports efforts by state, regional, and local governments to reduce our dependence on the automobile, while expanding access to local goods, services and employment and improving public health. This includes support for and increased access to public transit, pedestrian-friendly community development, and expanded opportunities for walking and biking. The American Lung Association recognizes that transportation needs may be different for urban, suburban and rural areas.

Transportation Funding and Planning

The American Lung Association supports increased public funding for programs that reduce air pollution emissions from transportation sources including support for public transit, intercity rail, and other non-highway modes of transport. The American Lung Association encourages Congress to develop a consistent funding mechanism for these critical investments. The American Lung Association supports the development of a national transportation policy framework to guide investment decisions that includes performance metrics supporting sustainable communities. Such performance metrics should (1) integrate transportation investment, land-use planning, and air pollution reduction efforts, and (2) encourage development of healthier, more compact, mixed-use communities that support accessible and affordable transportation alternatives for residents of all income levels. This framework must also include the fair treatment and meaningful community involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of any impacts related to transportation planning and policy to ensure everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work.

Biofuels for Transportation

The American Lung Association supports the increased use of biofuels for transportation if such fuels are produced from sources, and using methods, which result in a significant net reduction in lifecycle emissions of air pollutants including carbon dioxide compared to petroleum fuels. The American Lung Association believes that air quality and public health may be harmed by the increased use of mid-range blends of ethanol in vehicles and engines that are not designed to use such fuels. Mid-range gasoline-ethanol blends (greater than 10 percent and less than 85 percent ethanol) should only be used in vehicles approved for their use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The American Lung Association believes that U.S. farm policies and transportation policies should be aligned to encourage biofuels development using sources that will provide the greatest net air quality benefit.

Flex-Fueled Vehicles

The American Lung supports the use of E85, a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, for flex-fueled vehicles specifically designed to operate on this fuel. E85 vehicles are required to meet the same tailpipe emissions standards as other light duty vehicles; however, when using E85, E85 vehicles may have lower emissions of some pollutants than gasoline-fueled vehicles. The American Lung Association supports federal incentives for the purchase of E85 flex-fuel vehicles if and only if these incentives require the use of E85.

Advanced Vehicle, Engines, and Fuels

The American Lung Association supports public and private sector incentives and investments for the research, development and demonstration of technologies that reduce public health impacts from the transportation sector and lead to broadly available and affordable vehicles, equipment and fuels with fewer lifecycle emissions of air pollutants, including greenhouse gases. Such technologies include but are not limited to advanced batteries, electric vehicles and advanced biofuels. The American Lung Association supports more stringent controls on air emissions from electricity production, and in particular the phase out on coal-fired generation to enable electric vehicles used across the country to contribute to overall reductions in air emissions.

Marine and Aircraft Engines

The American Lung Association supports the Emissions Control Area for U.S. coastal waters. The American Lung Association supports stringent emissions limits and fuel requirements for all ocean-going vessels regardless of national flag. The American Lung Association supports emissions requirements for aircraft that are comparable in stringency to other mobile source emissions standards and supports measures, including regulation, to reduce aviation emissions. The American Lung Association encourages the phase-out of lead in aviation gasoline, and reductions in the sulfur content of aviation fuels.