

March 31, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Maintaining Clean Air and Climate Progress to Protect Lung Health**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the American Lung Association, I am writing to express our appreciation for your leadership to protect Californians from the enormous threat to public health that is COVID-19. I also write to you today to request your ongoing commitment to confronting the ongoing threat of air pollution to the public's health. We know that we are in extraordinary times that call for the full marshalling of California's leadership and we cannot afford to delay progress in the fight for healthy air.

As we move into April, the American Lung Association is preparing our annual [State of the Air](#) report that will highlight the progress that strong clean air programs have made and the ongoing – and growing – impacts of air pollution in California as the climate changes. While air pollution reductions are occurring during shelter in place responses to COVID-19, we know that the underlying impacts of air pollution remain and demand consistent, strong implementation of existing and planned programs and investments if we are to achieve clean air for all Californians.

While polluting industries are brazenly seeking to exploit the COVID-19 crisis to push an anti-regulatory agenda with rollbacks and delays in California and nationally, we urge you to maintain California's steadfast commitment to clean air for all Californians.

We cannot afford to compound one lung health crisis by removing tools to protect lung health from another.

Unfortunately, over the 20-year history of the *State of the Air* report, California communities have appeared at the [top of the lists for most impacted by ozone and particle pollution](#). These pollutants are widespread and can pose daily challenges for all Californians, but especially our most vulnerable residents. Children, seniors, those with asthma, COPD, heart disease and other illnesses and lower-income residents face greater vulnerabilities due to unhealthy air. These burdens were highlighted in our *State of the Air* 2019 report, in which we documented significant increases in ozone and particle pollution due to extreme heat and catastrophic wildfires that impacted California between 2015 and 2017.

As we plan our April release of *State of the Air* 2020, detailing air quality data captured from 2016 to 2018 (inclusive of the Camp, Woolsey and other 2018 wildfires and record heat), we know that the findings will continue to show the impacts of climate change on air quality in the state – impacts that will unfortunately long outlast the reductions in pollution caused by the shelter in place orders. Even as the American Lung Association confronts the extraordinary challenges of COVID-19, we remain as committed as ever to carrying out our mission to support clean air in all California communities. California must maintain progress in setting strong clean air standards.

**Sacramento**

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At present, California is preparing critically important rules to protect the health of local residents against toxic diesel particle pollution, ozone impacts and climate change. Rules nearing completion, such as the Ocean Going Vessels at Berth rule to require deep cuts in harmful exhaust in port communities, the Advanced Clean Trucks rule to support the manufacture of zero emission trucks, the Low NOx Truck rule to ensure more health protective controls on diesel engines and the Transportation Refrigeration Unit program to shift diesel-powered equipment to more efficient and zero emission technologies will all provide critical public health protections, reductions in cancer risks and premature deaths. Both current and in-development pollution control programs must move forward as planned.

We also believe that the vision laid out in your Executive Order N-19-19 must move forward to ensure transportation programs support public health through reductions in harmful emissions and increased focus on healthier, active transportation and transit that afford all residents with transportation options. Support for ongoing access to transit is an urgent concern in many communities now, and especially as we come through the crisis.

We look forward to working with you to ensure ongoing progress and success of current and planned clean air programs. Coming out of these challenging times, we know that clean air remains out of reach for too many Californians and we must maintain momentum to protect public health from all lung health crises.

Sincerely,



Will Barrett  
American Lung Association

cc: Kate Gordon, Director, Office of Planning and Research  
Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency  
David Kim, Secretary, California Transportation Agency  
Mary Nichols, Chair, California Air Resources Board  
Toni Atkins, California Senate President Pro Tempore  
Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the California Assembly  
Tung Le, Executive Director, California Air Pollution Control Officers Association

