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Lung Association “State of the Air” 2016 Report Finds More Than 80 Percent of Californians Still at Risk From Unhealthy Air

17th annual report on air quality for cities and counties shows progress; challenges

Editor’s Note: Trend charts, rankings, regional fact sheets, and maps are available at www.stateoftheair.org/california2016

(April 20, 2016, Los Angeles, CA) – The American Lung Association *State of the Air 2016* report released today found that despite continued improvements in air quality, eight out of 10 Californians live in counties that have unhealthy levels of either ozone or particle pollution. This year’s report covers data collected in 2012 to 2014 for ozone and particle pollution – two of the most widespread pollutants that can be deadly to public health.

The Bakersfield metropolitan area returned to the top of the list for the most polluted area in the country for particle pollution, while Los Angeles continues to top the list for the most polluted for ozone pollution.

Specifically, of the top ten cities in the U.S. with the worst air pollution, California municipalities rank as follows:

Ozone Pollution <i>6 out of the Top 10</i>	Short-Term Particle Pollution <i>6 out of the Top 10</i>	Annual Particle Pollution <i>7 out of the Top 10</i>
#1 LA-Long Beach-Riverside	#1 Bakersfield	#1 Bakersfield
#2 Bakersfield	#2 Fresno-Madera	#2 Visalia-Porterville-Hanford
#3 Visalia-Porterville-Hanford	#3 Visalia-Porterville, Hanford	#3 Fresno-Madera
#4 Fresno-Madera	#4 Modesto-Merced	#4 LA-Long Beach-Riverside
#6 Sacramento-Roseville	#8 San Jose-SF-Oakland-Stockton	#5 El Centro
#7 Modesto-Merced	#9 LA-Long Beach-Riverside	#6 Modesto-Merced
		#6 San Jose-SF-Oakland-Stockton

Although many California cities are listed among the top 10 worst cities for air pollution, several others had their cleanest year yet for ozone or particle pollution, including Los Angeles which saw its lowest air pollution levels in the 17 years of the State of the Air report.

“Thanks to California’s cleaner vehicles and fuels and other innovative clean air policies, we’re seeing steady progress in our fight for cleaner air,” said Olivia J. (Gertz) Diaz-Lapham, President and CEO of the American Lung Association in California. “However, more than 80 percent of Californians –32 million residents –still live in counties with unhealthy air during certain parts of the year. We simply must do more to protect the health of Californians.”



Despite these rankings, the *State of the Air 2016* report shows also that many California cities made significant improvements in reducing unhealthy ozone and particle pollution since the report was first issued in 2004. The Southern California region has seen a 90 percent reduction in unhealthy particle pollution levels over the history of the report, although improvements are still needed to better protect public health from the deadly effects of air pollution. This year, El Centro, Los Angeles, Sacramento and Visalia had the fewest unhealthy ozone days ever reported. In addition, Salinas was once again named as one of the cleanest cities in the nation, one of only four cities to make the cleanest city rankings for all three categories. Santa Maria-Santa Barbara and Redding-Red Bluff also appeared on the list of cleanest cities for particle pollution.

California's ongoing pollution problems are primarily caused by emissions from transportation sources, including cars, diesel trucks and buses, locomotives, ships and agricultural equipment, and other sources including oil refineries, manufacturing plants, residential wood burning and wildfires. The weather conditions, heat and geography in California combined with high emissions facilitate smog and soot formation. This year's report shows the substantial impact of climate change in worsening air quality conditions, especially in the San Joaquin Valley. Higher temperatures and increased pollution generated by climate change will lead to increased illnesses, hospitalizations and health emergencies.

State of the Air 2016 utilizes the new, more health protective, federal standard for ozone (smog) levels – 70 parts per billion – in the measurement of unhealthy smog and soot.

"Air pollution remains a huge public health threat, contributing to thousands of hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and deaths every year to our most vulnerable loved ones – children, seniors, and those battling lung diseases such as lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema," said David Tom Cooke, MD, Head of the UC Davis Section of General Thoracic Surgery and member of the Lung Association's volunteer governing board. "We must redouble our efforts to transition California off of fossil fuels for transportation and energy generation by investing in zero emission solutions."

To address the challenge of air pollution and climate change, the American Lung Association in California and others in the health community urge the public and policy leaders to strongly support for the federal Clean Air Act and the federal Clean Power Plan as well as California's progressive clean energy and clean air policies. This year the lung association is also calling for support of [Senate Bill 1383 \(Lara\)](#) to set clear targets for reducing "super pollutants" like black carbon from diesel exhaust and wood burning that threaten public health and are accelerating climate change.

For more information on the *State of the Air 2016* report, the public should visit: www.stateoftheair.org/california2016.

About the American Lung Association

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is "Fighting For Air" through research, education, and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.lung.org/california.