

December 5, 2013

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
William Jefferson Clinton Building Mail Code 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20460.

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

As representatives of our nation's diverse faith communities, we write to express our gratitude to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for proposing strong "Tier 3" clean vehicle and fuel standards, which will reduce smog-forming pollution, make our air healthier to breathe, and save lives. We also write to strongly urge you to finalize these critical standards expeditiously. **The longer the standards are delayed, the longer the health of God's creation, as well as the health of our most vulnerable citizens – those in low-income communities, our elderly, and our children – must wait and suffer the life-threatening consequences of air that is dangerous to breathe.**

As people of faith, we are taught through our sacred texts to love our neighbors and to serve the least among us. Our shared values as a society demand that our air be safe to breathe for everyone. The EPA has been charged with ensuring that all people are protected from significant risks to human health and the environment where they live, learn, and work. In order to fulfill that mission, these standards must be finalized as soon as possible.

It is also important to act quickly because of the increasing number of high heat days due to climate change. As temperatures rise, limiting ozone-forming pollution becomes even more urgent. President Obama has highlighted the impacts that climate change is already having on communities across the nation. We must seek out every available option for limiting pollution that exacerbates the impact of climate change.

The health benefits associated with the Tier 3 proposal are clear. By reducing the sulfur content of gasoline and tailpipe pollution, the proposed standards would prevent up to 2,400 premature deaths, 3,200 hospital visits, and 22,000 asthma attacks annually by 2030. Further, the standards would prevent 1.8 million lost school and workdays.

These benefits will only be achieved once the standard is finalized and implemented. As representatives of diverse faith communities across the U.S. concerned with the health of our citizens and our environment, we urge you to finalize Tier 3 standards as soon as possible and prevent any further delays of these critical safeguards.

Faithfully,

Carmelite NGO
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Creation Justice Ministries
Evangelical Environmental Network
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends Committee on National Legislation

GreenFaith
Interfaith Power & Light
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Maryknoll Office For Global Concerns
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Institute Justice Team

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Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We applaud the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for proposing strong "Tier 3" clean vehicle and fuel standards, which will make our air cleaner to breathe and save lives. We are writing to strongly urge you to finalize these critical standards as soon as possible, in order to maximize the economic, public health and air quality benefits that these standards deliver.

Recent reports in the media have suggested EPA may not finalize Tier 3 standards by the end of 2013, a possibility made more real by the government shutdown. Failing to finalize these standards by the end of the year could unnecessarily expose Americans to health risks and health-related costs.

The health benefits associated with the Tier 3 proposal are well established. By reducing the sulfur content of gasoline and tailpipe pollution, the proposed standards would prevent up to 2,400 premature deaths, 3,200 hospital visits and 22,000 asthma attacks annually by 2030. Further, the standards would prevent 1.8 million lost school and workdays.

The proposed Tier 3 standards will dramatically reduce emissions of ozone-forming pollution, which exacts a substantial toll on our public health and our environment, including our national parks and other public lands. Compared to existing standards for new vehicles, the proposed standards would cut fleet-wide emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds by 80 percent. Further, Tier 3 standards would reduce per-vehicle particulate matter by 70 percent. These emissions reductions are critical for states to meet health-based air quality standards under the Clean Air Act.

In addition to significant health benefits, Tier 3 will also realize economic benefits. According to a study by Navigant Economics, Tier 3 will create over 24,000 new jobs over three years for pollution control equipment installation at the nation's refineries. Another nearly 5,300 jobs will be created by the operation and maintenance of this new equipment.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 3 proposal will significantly reduce vehicle pollution and make our air cleaner to breathe. But these benefits are only achieved once the standard is finalized and implemented. EPA's job is not yet done. The agency must finalize Tier 3 standards as soon as possible and prevent delays of the substantial economic, health and environmental benefits that will come from their implementation.

Sincerely,

John Judge
CEO
Appalachian Mountain Club

David Foster
Executive Director
Blue Green Alliance

Kieran Suckling
Executive Director
Center for Biological Diversity

Frank O'Donnell
President
Clean Air Watch

Robert Wendelgass
President
Clean Water Action

Kathleen Rogers
President
Earth Day Network

Margie Alt
Executive Director
Environment America

Fred Krupp
President
Environmental Defense Fund

Howard Learner
President & Executive Director
Environmental Law and Policy Center

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

Dominique Browning
Senior Director
Moms Clean Air Force

Theresa Pierno
Acting President
National Parks and Conservation
Association

Frances Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Dan Becker
Director
Safe Climate Campaign

Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club

Stephen A. Smith, DVM
Executive Director
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

Kathleen Rest
Executive Director
Union of Concerned Scientists

Peggy M. Shepard
Executive Director
WE ACT for Environmental Justice