

The Honorable Administrator Michael S. Regan
US Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20004

cc:

September 13, 2023

Dear Administrator Regan:

The undersigned businesses and associations from various industries, both large and small, that employ millions of Americans, and support local governments in areas that we operate. We are, therefore, deeply concerned about the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposal to make the particulate matter (PM) standard the most stringent ever and the harmful impacts it may have on the economy. The EPA's current regulations are working, air quality continues to improve, and the United States continues to reduce emissions. Implementation of unprecedented PM standards could significantly damage the economy by imposing unachievable emissions limits and reduction targets on many parts of our country, including rural and undeveloped areas. The 2012 PM standards were just reviewed in 2020, and the current reconsideration of the PM standards is discretionary and not required by the Clean Air Act. Therefore, given the potential consequential economic impacts, we strongly urge you to not proceed with tightening the PM standards.

We all value clean air. The managers and employees of the companies we represent, their families, and all Americans breathe the same air. We are proud that implementation of the Clean Air Act and technological advances from American innovators have dramatically improved air quality in the U.S. Since 1970, the combined emissions of criteria and precursor pollutants have dropped by 78 percent. Specific to PM, fine particle concentrations have declined by 42 percent since 2000.

Indeed, states and businesses are currently committing substantial resources – both in time and money – towards achieving emissions reductions under the 2020 PM standards. However, tightening the standards will bring additional areas of the country into nonattainment. Local communities could face burdens to commercial and industrial activity not only vital to creating and maintaining jobs, but also to providing tax revenue that supports important local services like public safety and education. An overly strict PM standard could be a hardship to the American worker that is real and immediate.

If implemented, EPA's tightened PM standards could limit business expansion in many areas of the United States and risk the ability of U.S. companies to create new jobs. These standards add red tape to companies seeking to grow, even in areas currently in attainment, especially given how many areas will be in non-attainment with a new, stricter standard. The Clean Air Act carries stiff consequences for non-attainment areas, which can directly impact economic vitality of local communities and make it difficult to attract and develop business. Increased costs associated with restrictive and expensive permit requirements could likely deter companies from siting new facilities in a nonattainment area, making the United States a less attractive place to do business and risking shipping jobs overseas.

Companies building a new facility or performing major modifications to certain existing facilities resulting in increased PM concentrations in, or near, a non-attainment area will be required to install the most effective emission reduction technology regardless of cost. In most regions, even without industry, electricity generating units, and mobile source contributions, other sources, including agriculture, fugitive roadway dust, wildfires, account for the majority of PM emissions. Attaining lower PM standards across the nation will not be feasible due to natural and local sources.

Against these economic consequences, scientific uncertainties regarding the benefits of more stringent PM standards are significant. Indeed, stringent standards may have severe unintended consequences for the public. Studies show that by increasing the costs of goods and services such as energy, and decreasing disposable incomes, regulation can inadvertently harm the socio-economic status of individuals.¹ As representatives of the various U.S. business sectors providing needed jobs and investments in our communities, as well as the community leaders themselves, we believe these scientific uncertainties should be better understood in order to best allocate resources in a manner that strengthens both the environment and the economy.

The air is getting cleaner, and progress continues toward meeting the 2020 PM standards. Therefore, in light of the discretionary nature of this review, the potential resulting economic hardship, and the uncertain benefits related to the stringent PM standards, we call on EPA to maintain the current PM standards.

Sincerely,

Club 20
Colorado Oil & Gas Association
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
Pro 15 Northeast Colorado
Western Energy Alliance
Associated General Contractors of Georgia
Georgia Agribusiness Council
Georgia Asphalt Pavement Association
Georgia Chemistry Council
Georgia Concrete Contractors Association
Georgia Electric Membership Corporation
Georgia Food Industry Association
Georgia Highway Contractors Association
Georgia Oilmen's Association
Georgia Railroad Association

¹ Bierman, Alex; Louie, Patricia and Wu, Cary (2023). Assessment of Sociodemographics and Inflation-Related Stress in the US. JAMA Netw Open, 6(5): e231343 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2804873>

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Georgia Retailers Association
Metro Atlanta Chamber
Oglethorpe Power Corporation
Chemistry Industry Council of Illinois
Illinois Manufacturers Association
Louisiana Mid-continent Oil & Gas Association
American Petroleum Institute-Ohio
Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio
Associated General Contractors of Ohio
Manufacturing Policy Alliance
Ohio Aggregates & Industrial Minerals Association
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
Ohio Cast Metals Association
Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Ohio Chemistry Technology Council
Ohio Coal Association
Ohio Contractors Association
Ohio Energy and Convenience Association
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Ohio Gas Association
Ohio Grocers Association
Ohio Home Builders Association
Ohio Manufacturers' Association
Ohio Municipal League
Ohio Oil and Gas Association
Ohio Restaurant Association
Ohio Trucking Association
Ohio's Electric Cooperatives
Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce
Ahrens Farm
API Pennsylvania
ARIPPA
Arte Asset Management
Associated Pennsylvania Constructors
Bader's Lawn Care
Barucky Automotive
Checkered Express Convenience Store
Diamond Publications
Global Service Source
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
Homestead Fresh Chicken Farm
Kovarik Automotive

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Larry Casey Plumbing and Heating
Law Office of James L. Coster
Manufacturer and Business Association
Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay
MB Auto Services
Morgan Benefits LLC
National Painting Contractors, Inc.
Obscurity New Age Shoppe
Pennsylvania Aggregates and Concrete Association
Pennsylvania Builders Association
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry
Pennsylvania Chemical Industry Council
Pennsylvania Coal Alliance
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
Pennsylvania Forest Products Association
Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association
Pennsylvania Independent Petroleum Producers
Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association
Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association
Pennsylvania Petroleum Association
Plum Creek Pups
Roger L. Sutton Contracting
Roth Enterprises LLC
Shepstone Management Company, Inc.
Synergy Technologies
The Forest City News Inc.
Trinity Mineral Partners
Twin Houses LLC
United Freight Organization