



Press Statement

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19 Health Organizations Respond to ‘Censoring Science’ Final Rule

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 11, 2021) – In response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) final “Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science Underlying Significant Regulatory Actions and Influential Scientific Information” rule, often called the “Censoring Science” rule, the American Lung Association, the Allergy & Asthma Network, the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, the American Heart Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Thoracic Society, the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Children’s Environmental Health Network, Climate for Health, Health Care Without Harm, the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology -- North American Chapter, the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, the National Environmental Health Association, the National League for Nursing, the National WIC Association, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Public Health Institute issued the following statement:

“Our organizations were dismayed by EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler’s decision to finalize the ‘Censoring Science’ rule last week. We call on President-elect Biden to take action on day one to minimize the damage of this rule on public health.

“The fundamental premise of the final ‘Censoring Science’ rule is the same as it has been throughout its development: the false claim that peer-reviewed, published health studies are somehow not transparent because they protect the confidential information of their study participants. This effort has never been about transparency; it has been about suppressing sound studies that show the need for more cleanup of dangerous pollution that harms the health of Americans.

“Under the rule EPA finalized, scientific studies may be excluded from consideration entirely or may be given lesser consideration in the policymaking process if their underlying data is not made public. For many studies, making this data public is not possible without violating researchers’ obligation to keep the personal information of their study participants private.

“EPA’s final rule applies specifically to dose-response studies, which are critical for documenting the human health impacts of pollution exposure. In one key way, the final rule is actually an expansion from the initial rule proposals. It applies not just to significant regulatory actions but also to ‘influential scientific information,’ a broad category that goes beyond rulemaking.

“This effort to censor science has garnered unprecedented opposition from the public health, medical and scientific community and strikes at the core of EPA’s mission to protect human health and the environment.

“We call on President-elect Biden to take swift action to repeal this rule as soon as he takes office. We also call on the President-elect and EPA to immediately get to work on measures to clean up air pollution and address climate change, and to ensure that they are based on sound science. The final rule includes a provision that allows the EPA Administrator to allow studies to be given full consideration. We urge the new Administrator to use this authority. With a wealth of new scientific research documenting the health impacts of air pollution, including a slew of emerging studies about the links between air pollution exposure and COVID-19, the scientific evidence is stronger than ever that immediate air pollution cleanup will save lives.”

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About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, a holder of the coveted 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and a Gold-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: [Lung.org](https://www.lung.org).

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