



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America



Alliance of Nurses for
Healthy Environments



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
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Children's
Environmental
Health
Network



The Medical
Society Consortium
ON CLIMATE & HEALTH



National Association of
Pediatric Nurse PractitionersSM



PHYSICIANS
FOR SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY

December 6, 2023

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Approve Strong Phase 3 Truck Standards without Delay

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned leading health organizations call on your administration to urgently prioritize finalizing strong new greenhouse gas standards for heavy-duty vehicles. Ensuring these standards are finalized by spring 2024 is absolutely critical for health equity and environmental justice.

Our organizations have applauded your administration's focus on environmental justice and praised EPA's proposal of Phase 3 greenhouse gas emissions standards for trucks. These priorities go hand-in-hand: heavy-duty vehicles are major contributors toward the disparate and devastating impacts of air pollution on communities of color. Setting with the strongest possible standards for cleaning up trucking emissions and moving American trucking to zero-emissions are necessary for advancing environmental justice. The final Phase 3 truck rule must set robust standards for all categories of heavy-duty vehicles, including Class 8 trucks that cause outsized damage to health in communities across America. And it must be finalized as quickly as possible, no later than the beginning of March 2024.

Today, nearly 120 million Americans live in a community impacted by unhealthy levels of air pollution in the form of ozone and/or particle pollution according to the American Lung Association's "[State of the Air](#)" 2023 report. Ozone and particle pollution contribute to a wide range of negative health consequences including asthma attacks, heart attacks and stroke and premature death. These burdens fall most heavily on more vulnerable populations, including children, seniors, those living with lung and heart illness, lower-income residents and people of color.

Traffic pollution is specifically implicated in increased risk of all cause mortality, cardiovascular mortality, lung cancer mortality, asthma onset in children and adults and other damages. Heavy duty vehicle emissions are a significant contributor to these lung health burdens, to health inequities and to climate change, which is making the job of protecting public health – and decades of Clean Air Act momentum – much more difficult.

EPA's [Transportation Pollution and Environmental Justice analysis](#) shows that 72 million people live in close proximity to major freight routes in the United States. Because of their heightened exposures, these individuals bear disproportionate burdens due to trucking pollution, and EPA notes that they are “more likely to be people of color and have lower incomes.”

Climate change is exacerbating air pollution and intensifying health burdens on at-risk communities. Transportation remains the largest contributor to climate pollution. Alleviating trucking pollution burdens through the strongest possible Phase 3 rules must be central to your administration's work to address environmental justice.

Based in part on EPA's analysis, the American Lung Association's "[Delivering Clean Air](#)" report issued in October 2022 found that a transition to zero-emission trucking and electricity generation could yield \$735 billion in public health benefits in U.S. counties with the highest truck traffic, saving 66,000 lives and avoiding millions of 1.7 million asthma attacks and 8.5 million lost work days. These present injustices and potential health benefits must drive your administration to immediately finalize strong Phase 3 standards that set the course for zero-emission trucking across all weight classes.

Delaying all or part of the Phase 3 rule would leave major public health benefits unrealized and perpetuate existing inequities. Your administration's commitments to environmental justice will go unrealized without strong final action to clean up heavy-duty vehicles.

The prompt finalization of the strongest possible Phase 3 standards for all new heavy-duty trucks will provide a strong step forward toward reducing and eliminating harmful emissions from the trucking sector, improving health equity and advancing environmental justice.

Sincerely,

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CC: The Honorable Michael Regan, Administrator, U.S. EPA