



## Protecting and Preserving the Clean Air Act and Reducing Air Pollution

The undersigned health and medical organizations strongly support the Clean Air Act and the authority it gives to EPA to protect health from air pollution. The combined impacts of air pollution and climate pollution pose major threats to the health and wellness of every community. Any attempts to limit the ability of the public to engage in the review of projects that will impact their health and agencies to protect health from an increase in air pollution will be met with opposition from the health and medical community. **We oppose H.R.1, the Lowering Energy Costs Act, and its attempt to weaken the Clean Air Act to allow for additional polluting energy sources.**

### Increasing Fossil Fuel Use Will Worsen Air Quality

Years of scientific research has clearly established that pollution is a threat to human health at every stage of life – from inside the womb to adulthood.<sup>1,2</sup> Some groups are at a higher risk of illness and death, including pregnant individuals, people with pre-existing health conditions, people of color and low-wealth individuals.<sup>3,4</sup>

Burning fossil fuels use is not only contributing to a warming climate, but the combustion-based processes are contributing to higher levels of dangerous – and deadly – pollution. Congress should be strengthening the protections from air pollution by providing additional resources to better monitor the air and hold polluters accountable, not by opening the door to more fossil fuel infrastructure.

### The Public Has a Right to Engage in Protecting Their Communities

<sup>1</sup> Johnson NM, Hoffmann AR, Behlen JC, Lau C, Pendleton D, Harvey N, Shore R, Li Y, Chen J, Tian Y, Zhang R. Air pollution and children's health—a review of adverse effects associated with prenatal exposure from fine to ultrafine particulate matter. *Environ Health Prev Med.* 2021; 26:72.

<sup>2</sup> Di Q, Dai L, Wang Y, Zanobetti A, Choirat C, Schwartz JD, Dominici F. Association of Short-Term Exposure to Air Pollution with Mortality in Older Adults. *JAMA.* 2017; 318:2446-2456.

<sup>3</sup> Erqou S, Clougherty JE, Olafiranye O, Magnani JW, Aiyer A, Tripathy S, Kinnee E, Kip KE, Reis SE. Particulate Matter Air Pollution and Racial Differences in Cardiovascular Disease Risk. *Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol.* 2018; 38:00-00.

<sup>4</sup> Liu J, Clark LP, Bechle MJ, Hajat A, Kim S-Y, Robinson AL, Sheppard L, Szpiro AA, Marshall JD. Disparities in air pollution exposure in the United States by race/ethnicity and income, 1990–2010. *Environ Health Perspect.* 2021; 129(12).

Public participation is a cornerstone of sound environmental decision making. People have a right to know about the impact of a project on their community and must have the opportunity to engage around projects that would impact their communities. Limiting environmental analysis could fail to inform the public about the true health impacts that could come from building a new polluting energy source. We oppose any attempts to curtail opportunities for public comments in these decisions or limit legal rights of impacted communities.

### **Investments to Clean Up Air and Climate Pollution Should be Protected**

H.R. 1 would repeal key components of clean energy investments signed into law in 2022, including a program to reduce methane emissions, a fund to help communities lower their overall greenhouse gas emissions and home electrification incentives for individuals. The health and medical community supported those investments and will continue to advocate for reducing the emissions that fuel climate change, which is impacting physical and mental health by leading to more catastrophic wildfires, flooding, poor air quality, longer allergy seasons and more.

### **The Clean Air Act Has Worked, but Climate Change is Threatening to Undo Progress**

The air communities are breathing now is much cleaner than it was over 50 years ago before the passage of the Clean Air Act. But greenhouse gas emissions that are fueling climate change – like methane (“natural”) gas – is threatening the reverse the clock.<sup>5</sup> Climate change makes air quality worse. Spikes in particle pollution and high ozone days related to wildfires and extreme heat are putting millions more people at risk and adding challenges of improving air quality. Our organizations urge Congress to reject attempts to modify or weaken the Clean Air Act to allow for the buildout of new fossil fuel projects. Health is already at risk from air pollution and climate change. We should not be making it more difficult to breathe clean air.

**Please oppose H.R. 1 in its entirety and instead work towards a zero-emission, non-combustion future.**

Allergy & Asthma Network  
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy  
Environments  
American College of Physicians  
American Lung Association  
American Public Health Association  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Climate Psychiatry Alliance  
ecoAmerica/Climate for Health  
Health Care Without Harm  
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future

National Association of County and City  
Health Officials  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse  
Practitioners  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National League for Nursing  
Public Health Institute

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<sup>5</sup> *State of the Air*. American Lung Association. Apr 21, 2022, <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/key-findings>