



## FACT SHEETS

## Landmark Law under Attack

# Defending the Clean Air Act

The decade of the seventies was a watershed time for passing keystone laws to protect wildlife, the environment and public health. This includes the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Now, 40 year later, the Clean Air Act (CAA) is under attack as industry polluters ally themselves with Members of Congress in an attempt to tie the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) hands as it moves forward to strengthen a number of components of this landmark law.

### A HISTORY OF CLEANER AIR

The Clean Air Act has been a success story in many ways by protecting public health, making cities more liveable, safeguarding our environment and providing the same benefits that lower pollution brings to birds and wildlife.

In 1990, the Clean Air Act was amended and improved, regulating a broader class of air toxics, imposing new standards on ozone, a major component of smog, improving emissions from cars and trucks, and creating a major program to curb sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, major contributors to acid rain.

Now, EPA has again turned to the Clean Air Act to increase public health protections, especially for vulnerable populations like children and the elderly. EPA is working to curb mercury, soot, sulfur and nitrogen oxides, and smog—all key pollutants that contribute to premature deaths each year. For instance, one in six American women carries enough mercury in her body to pose a potential risk to her baby if she became pregnant. Coal-fired power plants are the biggest source of mercury emissions in the country and pose risks not just to humans, but to wildlife as well.

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### DON'T LET CONGRESS CRIPPLE THE CLEAN AIR ACT

#### LEND YOUR VOICE!

Congress needs to know that Americans won't tolerate assaults on public health, the environment, and abundant and healthy wildlife. The Clean Air Act must remain strong and EPA must be allowed to do its job protecting public health and our wildlife.

Please write a personal message to Montana's Senator and Representative. In your own words, let them know why clean air is important to you. Use some of these talking points or add your own.

1. As a parent or grandparent, you want healthy air for your children.
2. As a caregiver for elderly parents, you want healthy air for aging relatives.
3. Much progress on cleaner, healthier air has been made—now is not the time to turn back the clock.
4. Clean Air Act regulations have spurred innovations that have created jobs, and benefited our economy.
5. The EPA must be allowed to continue to regulate greenhouse gas pollutants to help solve climate change.
6. Mercury, soot, acid rain, smog and carbon pollution threaten our health, our environment and our economy.
7. A clean environment, with abundant healthy wildlife is important to you and future generations.

*End your comments with an appeal to oppose any legislation that weakens EPA or the Clean Air Act!*

EPA is also using its authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gas pollution, the leading cause of global warming. Already the agency has proposed regulations to curtail emissions from cars and trucks and the next step is to regulate the largest stationary sources of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas pollutants from manufacturing, industrial boilers, and utilities.

### INDUSTRY CRIES WOLF

From the beginning of the Act in the 70s, through the long-fought battle in the 80s to finally improve the Act in 1990, industry has fought each step of the way, claiming total collapse of industries, major job losses, and crippling economic consequences. Whether it was the effort to put catalytic converters on cars, reduce acid rain, or phase out the chemicals responsible for depleting upper atmospheric ozone, polluting industries claimed massive economic disruptions that never materialized.

Instead, public health and the environment improved—eliminating lead in gasoline meant fewer impaired children; better air quality meant fewer asthma attacks and fewer deaths for those with compromised cardiac or respiratory systems; and less sulfur and nitrogen oxides in the air meant fewer streams and lakes threatened by acid rain.

The polluting industries are fighting back again and already a number of bills have been introduced by Members of Congress to tie EPA's hands and force them to back down on far-sighted plans to reduce toxins in our air and the carbon pollution that threatens to disrupt our natural world.

These efforts to weaken the law fly in the face of common sense. While industry has bucked at every proposed new requirement to clean up their pollution, the EPA estimates that for every \$1 spent to clean up pollution, the country realizes \$40 in economic benefits. That's a pretty good return on investment.

Claiming, once again, that proposed actions by EPA will cost jobs, and cripple our economy, Congress is poised to undo decades of work and prevent real gains for public health and the environment. **Now is the time to act to defend this landmark law and keep the Clean Air Act and EPA strong!**

### WHO TO WRITE AND WHAT TO SAY

Please contact Montana's Senators and Representative and let them know you care about Clean Air and solutions to climate change. They work for us, and they need to hear from all of us!

To be most effective, please convey your own message to Senator Baucus, Senator Tester, and Congressman Rehberg. Here is a sample postcard:

Dear Senator Baucus:

Please defend the Clean Air Act from all attacks. This important landmark law protects our health and our children's health. Improvements to the Act over the years have led to economic growth as well as improved air quality. Now is not the time to turn back the clock. Please keep the Clean Air Act strong and let the Environmental Protection Agency do its job.

EPA's ability to regulate Greenhouse Gas Pollutants and begin to solve climate change is crucial for the health of Montana, our wildlife and a sustainable world.

Sincerely,

*Name and address*

