

# Clean Air Act:

**The Clean Air Act gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to regulate air pollution levels to protect public health.** The Clean Air Act keeps our air clean of contaminants, which can trigger a host of illnesses including asthma, heart disease and even cancer. In fact, the health benefits of the Clean Air Act far outweigh the costs. APHA strongly supports EPA's ability to regulate pollution under the Clean Air Act and opposes any efforts to weaken, delay or roll back life-saving public health protections.

## Get the Facts

The Clean Air Act protects public health and reduces health care costs for all by preventing thousands of adverse health outcomes, including cancer, asthma attacks, strokes, heart attacks, emergency department visits, hospitalizations and premature deaths. A rigorous, peer-reviewed analysis, *The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act from 1990 to 2020*, conducted by EPA, found that the air quality improvements under the Clean Air Act will save \$2 trillion by 2020 and prevent at least 230,000 deaths annually.

### **Two new Clean Air Act regulations will protect the health of millions of Americans.**

- The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards will reduce emissions of mercury, arsenic, acid gases and other dangerous toxins from coal-fired power plants.
- The Cross-State Air Pollution Rule requires states to create limits on power plant emissions, which contribute to ground-level ozone (smog) and particle pollution in other states.

### **Consider the following:**

- In 2010 alone, the Clean Air Act prevented 160,000 premature deaths, 1.7 million instances of exacerbated asthma and 45,000 cardiovascular hospital admissions, according to the American Lung Association.
- According to EPA's Second Prospective Report which looked at the results of the Clean Air Act from 1990–2020, the direct benefits from the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are estimated to reach almost \$2 trillion for the year 2020.
- Even low levels of air pollution can disrupt children's lung development and cause asthma, chronic bronchitis and other respiratory conditions.

New Rules Under CAA	What is Regulated?	How They Protect Public Health	Health Benefits by the Numbers	Benefits vs. Costs
Mercury & Air Toxics Standards	- Limits emissions of mercury, arsenic, acid gases and other non-metallic toxins from coal-fired power plants	- Mercury exposure can damage a child's brain development - These toxins create acid gas, impairing lung function	- Prevent 130,000 asthma attacks per year - Prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths per year - Prevent 4,700 heart attacks per year	- Benefit: \$90 billion - Cost: \$10 billion
Cross-State Air Pollution Rule	- Limits power plant emissions which cause smog & particle pollution - Reduces levels of SO <sub>2</sub> and Nitrogen Oxides (NO <sub>x</sub> )	- NO <sub>x</sub> exposure can cause emphysema and bronchitis - SO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> aggravate existing heart disease and asthma	- Prevent up to 34,000 premature deaths per year - Prevent 19,000 cases of acute bronchitis by 2014 - Prevent 19,000 hospital and emergency room visits per year	- Benefit: \$280 billion - Cost: \$7.2 billion*

\*Cost to implement from 2011–2014

## APHA Supports the Clean Air Act

APHA opposes any effort to hinder EPA's ability to protect public health through the Clean Air Act. APHA supports full implementation of the Clean Air Act and urges members of Congress to oppose any efforts to weaken, delay or block progress toward the continued implementation of the following vital public health protections:

- EPA's Cross-State Air Pollution Rule for power plants
- EPA's Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants
- EPA's Mercury and Air Toxics Standard for industrial and commercial boilers and incinerators
- EPA's Carbon Pollution Standard for new power plants

Sources:

- 1 American Lung Association. *Organizations Urge Congress to Uphold the Clean Air Act*, <http://www.lung.org/press-room/press-releases/uphold-clean-air-act.html>, accessed 3-5-2012.
- 2 EPA. *The Clean Air Act: Protecting Human Health and the Environment Since 1970 as the US Economy Has Grown*, <http://www.epa.gov/air/sect812/economy.html>, accessed 3-5-2012.
- 3 EPA. *Mercury Air Toxics Standards: Healthier Americans*, <http://www.epa.gov/mats/health.html>, accessed 3-5-2012.
- 4 EPA. "Nitrogen Dioxide", <http://www.epa.gov/air/nitrogenoxides/health.html>, accessed 3-5-2012.
- 5 EPA. *Cross-State Air Pollution Rule*, <http://www.epa.gov/crossstaterule>, accessed 3-5-2012.

