



ALLIANCE OF NURSES FOR HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

BRINGING SCIENCE AND PASSION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT

June 1st, 2026

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the undersigned nursing, medical, public health organizations, representing clinicians, health professionals, researchers, and advocates across the United States, we write to express our deep concern regarding the ongoing health impacts of tailpipe pollution and the urgent need to accelerate—rather than delay—the transition to zero-emission vehicles.

We implore you to work to ensure we are moving to a zero-emission future and to fight against any additional rollbacks that will delay our transition away from dirty tailpipe pollution. This includes opposing potential regulatory delays or rollback of the current Light-Duty Vehicle (LDV) Criteria Pollutant standards and the Heavy-Duty Vehicle (HDV) NOx rule.

Tailpipe pollution from vehicles releases harmful substances like fine particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds that can [significantly affect human health](#).¹ These pollutants can penetrate deep into the lungs, worsening asthma, reducing lung function, and increasing the risk of chronic respiratory diseases. They also contribute to cardiovascular problems such as heart attacks, stroke, and high blood pressure by causing inflammation and damage to blood vessels.

Emerging research links long-term exposure to cognitive decline and developmental issues in [children](#).² [Pregnant individuals](#).³ exposed to traffic pollution face higher risks of low birth weight and preterm birth. In addition, diesel exhaust is known to increase the risk of [lung cancer](#).⁴ Even short-term exposure can cause irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, along with headaches and dizziness.

¹ National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. (Last reviewed March 6, 2026, updated 2025). *Air Pollution and Your Health*. <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/air-pollution#:~:text=and%20prostate%20cancers,-Cardiovascular%20Disease.related%20changes%20in%20children%27s%20airways>.

² Bromley, F., & Ellis, N. (2026). The potential impact of traffic-related air pollution on children's cognitive development; implications for educational psychologists. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 42(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2025.2545855>

³ Aguilera, J., Konvinse, K., Lee, A., Maecker, H., Prunicki, M., Mahalingaiah, S., Sampath, V., Utz, P. J., Yang, E., & Nadeau, K. C. (2023). Air pollution and pregnancy. *Seminars in perinatology*, 47(8), 151838. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.semperi.2023.151838>

⁴ American Cancer Society. (February 26, 2024). Diesel exhaust and cancer risk. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/chemicals/diesel-exhaust-and-cancer.html#:~:text=The%20International%20Agency%20for%20Research.supporting%20evidence%20from%20lab%20studies>.





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According to organizations like the [World Health Organization](#)⁵ and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#),⁶ vehicle emissions are a major contributor to premature deaths worldwide, making tailpipe pollution a serious public health concern.

These harms are not distributed equally. Communities located near highways, freight corridors, ports, and industrial hubs—often [low-income communities and communities of color](#)⁷—experience disproportionate exposure to traffic-related air pollution and its associated health burdens. This represents a clear environmental justice issue and underscores the need for strong, protective policies that prioritize those most at risk.

At a time when cleaner transportation solutions are both available and scalable, we are alarmed by recent actions that undermine progress. We have seen attacks on the transition to clean vehicles in Congress with the removal of incentives, the removal of state authority to set their own standards, as well as in the regulatory space, including the rollback on the endangerment finding and clean vehicle standards. We express our concern about the prolonged effects and delays to cleaner vehicles caused by these attacks.

Delaying the transition to cleaner vehicles will result in preventable illness, increased healthcare costs, and avoidable loss of life. Conversely, accelerating the adoption of zero-emission vehicles offers immediate and long-term health benefits, including cleaner air, reduced disease burden, and healthier communities.

The health of our patients, communities, and future generations depends on the decisions made today. We stand ready to support policies that advance clean transportation, protect public health, and promote environmental justice. We urge Congress to defend strong vehicle pollution

⁵ World Health Organization. (October 24, 2024). Ambient (outdoor) air pollution.

[https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-\(outdoor\)-air-quality-and-health#:~:text=Ambient%20\(outdoor\)%20air%20pollution%20is%20a%20major.WHO%20South%2DEast%20Asia%20and%20Western%20Pacific%20Regions](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health#:~:text=Ambient%20(outdoor)%20air%20pollution%20is%20a%20major.WHO%20South%2DEast%20Asia%20and%20Western%20Pacific%20Regions).

⁶ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (Last updated August 7, 2025). Smog, soot, and other air pollution from transportation.

<https://www.epa.gov/transportation-air-pollution-and-climate-change/smog-soot-and-other-air-pollution-transportation#:~:text=Urban%20air%20toxics-.Programs%20to%20Reduce%20Smog%2C%20Soot%2C%20and%20Other%20Air%20Pollution%20from.4.8%20million%20work%20days%20lost>

⁷ Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University. (March 6, 2024). Communities of color across the US suffer a growing burden from polluted air.

<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/communities-color-across-us-suffer-growing-burden-polluted-air#:~:text=Overall%2C%20an%20estimated%2049%2C400%20premature,disease%2C%20lung%20cancer%20and%20stroke>.





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standards and oppose any rollbacks or delays to ensure continued progress toward a zero-emission future.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nurses Association\California
Arizona Health Professionals for Climate Action
Arizona Nurses Association
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Public Health Nurses
Climate for Health
Georgia Clinicians for Climate Action
Georgia Nurses Association
Hawai'i - American Nurses Association
Health Care Without Harm
Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health
Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action
National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Black Nurses Association
National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations
National League for Nursing
New Jersey State Nurses Association
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association



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