

As Prepared for Delivery
Comments of Laura Kate Bender
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On The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed
Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and
Medium-Duty Vehicles

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Good morning, my name is Laura Kate Bender and I'm the national assistant vice president for healthy air at the American Lung Association. My colleagues and I are each highlighting different points today on the health need to reduce emissions from light- and medium-duty vehicles. I'll use my time today to highlight the health imperative of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are driving climate change.

As my colleague Paul pointed out, we are strongly supportive of these multi-pollutant vehicle standards. The Lung Association – along with many of the other health orgs you'll hear testify this week – calls climate change a health emergency. But it's also a health opportunity, because the sources of greenhouse gas emissions are also typically sources of other emissions that drive immediate health harm. These rules are a great example of the outsized benefits of cleaning up sources to both address climate change and address other dangerous pollutants. If EPA finalizes these standards, especially if you finalize Alternative 1, these rules will protect health and promote health equity both in the short and long term.

The Lung Association often highlights the lung health impacts of climate change, from unhealthy levels of ozone driven by warmer temperatures to high particle pollution levels driven by wildfire smoke to the indoor air quality challenges of cleaning up a flooded home after an extreme weather event. And we all know there is a long list of other health harms, from spreading vector-borne diseases to increasing heat-related illness to worsened allergy seasons.

I've been at the Lung Association for more than a decade and have worked on clean air protections even longer. I've spent much of that time working to help shine a spotlight on the health consequences of climate change to drive action. We know that people care most about climate change when they connect it to their health – or their children's health. The unfortunate reality is that in this one respect, my job has become easier over the past decade. That's because more and more often, people have personal experiences with health harms driven by a warming climate. They get it because they're living it.

EPA's new report on Climate Change and Children's Health and Well-Being, released just last month, forecast the impacts to children's health specifically at 2 degrees and 4 degrees Celsius of warming. They found that at both levels, and I quote, "ED visits and hospital admissions due to general respiratory conditions are projected to increase, as are school days lost because of these effects. The analysis further projects additional premature deaths among newborns." They also projected increased asthma diagnoses, which will disproportionately affect BIPOC children. The report forecasts many more health impacts. To name a few: Learning loss in Northeastern and Northern Great Plains schools that don't have air conditioning. A dangerous mix of increased pollen and air pollution impacts in the Southeast. High rates of ED visits for asthma among children because of grass pollen exposure in the Southern Great Plains. Dust and wildfire smoke driving poor health outcomes in the West.

The need for climate action to stave off the worst of these outcomes is urgent. We deeply appreciate EPA's work on this proposal. We urge EPA to use Alternative 1 as the floor to maximize the health benefits of this rule, both to reduce emissions from future gasoline and diesel vehicles that will be out on the roads for years to come, and to drive toward a future where our nation's cars don't drive climate change and its many health harms to our kids. Thank you.