

As Prepared for Delivery
Comments of **Nick Torres**
Advocacy Director – CO, UT, WY
American Lung Association
On
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
California Waiver Hearing: Advanced Clean Trucks, Omnibus Low NOx, and HD Emission Warranty
Regulations

June 29, 2022

Good afternoon – I am Nick Torres, advocacy director for the American Lung Association in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. I appreciate the opportunity to offer comments in strong support of the US Environmental Protection Agency granting California’s cleaner truck waivers without delay to implement these critical public health policies.

Under the authority of the Clean Air Act granted over five decades ago, California has adopted policies to protect its residents from harmful air pollution. Cutting emissions from trucking and other heavy-duty vehicles is vital to improving public health, reducing health disparities, and reducing climate pollutants from the trucking industry. But these steps have resonated beyond California, reaching many other states (including my home state of Colorado) that can opt-in to these programs.

I urge the EPA to grant these waivers immediately so that California and other states can move forward with these life-saving rules.

These policies carry far-reaching effects in terms of environmental justice – reducing pollution and protecting the health of many vulnerable communities. The trucking sector is a major source of regional air pollution that threatens health, despite trucks making up a small percentage of the on-road vehicle population.

According to the American Lung Association’s *State of the Air 2022* report, 137 million people, more than one in four Americans – now live in a community impacted by unhealthy air quality. In Colorado, 81 percent of our population live in a community impacted by unhealthy air. Opting-in to California’s programs will help us ensure these communities are no longer disproportionately burdened with emissions from the trucking sector.

The Lung Association’s *State of the Air* report further noted that a person of color in the United States is 61 percent more likely to live in a community with a failing air pollution grade, and over 3 times more likely to live in a community with the worst air quality. The EPA’s own data outlined in the *Transportation Pollution and Environmental Justice Fact Sheet* shows that 72 million Americans live in near major trucking routes, and those people tend to be lower income people and people of color.

California’s waivers are crucial for our nationwide transition to zero-emission transportation and to realize the significant health benefits that could come from the expansion of zero-emission technologies. We strongly support EPA approving these waivers to ensure progress is made to achieving these benefits as more states adopt the California rules.

In Colorado, we are eager to see the implementation of cleaner trucking rules to ensure our citizens enjoy the benefits of cleaner engines and zero-emission technologies. Colorado faces significant ozone pollution burdens and needs to take more actions to achieve clean air for all residents. The Lung Association estimates that Colorado could experience \$9.5 billion in health benefits through the shift to zero-emission technologies. We are committed to pushing Colorado to act on these rules so that all Coloradans, especially our most vulnerable residents breathe healthier air.

Now I'd like to speak personally as a new father. Having my son has given me renewed purpose to make sure his generation and those that follow can have healthy air to breathe. As new parents, my wife and I sometimes obsess over our son's milestones. Is his neck strong enough? Why isn't he rolling over more? And sometimes just simply checking to make sure he's still breathing. And I think about how every breath that he inhales is full of so much potential. Every organ in his little body is changing and growing. Having healthy air to breathe is so critical for him to grow up with strong respiratory and immune systems.

The transition to zero-emission transportation is such a crucial step in meeting clean air and climate standards for future generations. Granting California these waivers for cleaner trucks and heavy-duty vehicles will carry far-reaching public health benefits, particularly for the most vulnerable among us. I urge EPA to grant the waivers without delay.