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H.R. 806, Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2017

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Introduction

Good morning Chairman Shimkus, Ranking Member Tonko, and members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Kurt Karperos. I am a Deputy Executive Officer for the California Air Resources Board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

The Air Resources Board is the California agency responsible for implementing the Clean Air Act in all areas of the State. I oversee this effort, including meeting federal air quality standards in the areas with the most persistent pollution – the greater Los Angeles area that we refer to as the South Coast, and the San Joaquin Valley.

These two regions pose the nation's greatest challenge in meeting the ozone standard and in ensuring the residents breathe healthful air.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our website: <http://www.arb.ca.gov>.

California Environmental Protection Agency

It's from that perspective that I want to cover three points in my testimony.

First, meeting health-based standards for air quality is achievable.

Second, economic growth and development while cleaning the air is not only possible, *it is a reality in California.*

And third, weakening the Clean Air Act, as H.R. 806 would do, is unnecessary and will harm the health and well-being of millions of people.

Public Health Imperative

Nearly half of California's 38 million residents live in regions with pollution levels that exceed the 70 parts per billion ozone standard.

Of those, almost 5 million are children, with nearly one-half million suffering from asthma.

California supported EPA's use of the most current and robust scientific studies to set a more health-protective ozone standard because reaching that standard will reduce premature mortality, emergency room visits for asthma, hospitalizations, and lost work and school days.

Simply put, meeting the ozone standard is a public health imperative.

California's Success Implementing the Clean Air Act

California has a long and successful history of meeting health-protective, science-based standards.

Of California's 19 areas that once exceeded either the 1-hour or original 8-hour ozone standards, only 4 still exceed those standards today.

The San Joaquin Valley has made significant progress. This extreme nonattainment area now meets the 1-hour ozone standard. It's on track to meet the 80 parts per billion standard. And last summer, San Joaquin Valley leaders adopted a plan to meet the 75 parts per billion 8-hour standard by the Clean Air Act's 2031 deadline.

The South Coast is more challenging, but progress there is also remarkable. The region once measured 1-hour ozone values above the standard on over 200 days per year. Today it has dropped to less than 20. Similarly, the number of days over the 8-hour standard has been cut in half since 1990.

California has achieved this at the same time that our population has grown by over 25 percent and the State's gross domestic product has more than doubled.

A Growing Economy at the Same Time

At the same time we have been cleaning the air, California's economy has continued to grow and prosper. Last year, California grew to be the world's sixth largest economy. In 2016, California nonfarm employment increased by 2.6 percent, compared to 1.7 percent nationwide.

In 2009, the California clean energy industry generated \$27 billion dollars and employed 123,000 people. By 2020, we expect it will grow to over \$140 billion with 345,000 employed.

Looking forward, EPA estimates that achieving the 70 parts per billion ozone standard would save Californians an estimated 0.4 to 1.4 billion dollars per year when accounting for both the costs of reducing emissions and the avoided costs of healthcare, lost work days and low productivity, and other pollution impacts.

The Clean Air Act has been the Tool for Achieving this Success

With its science-based, health-protective air quality standards, its meaningful deadlines, and its requirements for comprehensive plans, the Clean Air Act has been California's tool for achieving air quality and economic success.

The Clean Air Act requires early, comprehensive planning. California uses the planning required by the Act to minimize costs. H.R. 806 would delay planning and increase cost in the long-term.

Today's testimony is timely, as tomorrow, the California Air Resources Board will consider a plan that will not only provide the reductions needed to meet the 75 parts per billion ozone standard in 2031, but will also provide the emissions reductions needed for the new 70 parts per billion ozone standard in 2037.

Rather than delay and wait, California's solution is to move forward.

California has used the flexibility in the Act to drive innovation, using incentives to bring cost-effective technologies to market. Electric cars are the prime example.

The next step is cleaner trucks. California has already certified a truck that has 90 percent fewer emissions than those on the road today.

The needed technologies are here now.

Changes to the Clean Air Act are Unnecessary

California's success is proof that H.R. 806 is unnecessary.

H.R. 806 would inappropriately insert control costs into EPA's science-based process for setting air quality standards. How healthful the air is to breathe is not determined by the cost to

clean it up. It is a question of science and what air pollution does to the human body.

H.R. 806 would mean more people would breathe dirty air longer. It would unwisely mandate that we ignore the air pollution impacts of weather conditions made worse by man-made climate change.

It would push off deadlines, erode requirements for incremental progress, and undermine the Clean Air Act's requirements for comprehensive air quality strategies.

Closing

In closing, let me stress that meeting the federal health-protective ozone standards is both achievable and cost-effective.

The Clean Air Act provides the needed flexibility to do this.

Second, setting healthful air against economic prosperity is a false choice. California continues to show that clean air and economic growth go hand-in-hand.

And third, delaying the standards will harm the health and well-being of millions of people in this country. The San Joaquin Valley, in particular, is home to high rates of poverty, pollution, and asthma. It is especially critical to continue progress in that region.

In the end, the economic costs and the human cost of polluted air far exceed the costs of cleanup.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.