

## *Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee*

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February 2, 2007

Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator  
 United States Environmental Protection Agency  
 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20460

RE: Policy Assessment of Scientific and Technical  
 Information/OAQPS Staff Paper First Draft for Lead

Dear Administrator Johnson:

The Children's Health Protection Advisory committee (CHPAC) appreciates this opportunity to provide comments to you on the "Policy Assessment of Scientific and Technical Information/OAQPS Staff Paper First Draft for Lead". As the EPA's advisory panel on children's environmental health, we write this letter strongly urging that you not revoke the current National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for lead as is noted to be under consideration in this document. It is our consensus opinion that the current Maximum Achievable Control Technology standards controlling airborne lead contamination in communities are inadequate to protect children's health in the absence of a health-protective NAAQS. Given the high degree of toxicity and biopersistence of lead for children, we are deeply concerned that abandoning a national ambient air standard for lead could allow lead levels in the air to actually increase without any monitoring and regulatory system to detect and prevent this increase. Recent findings of impaired neurodevelopment in children down to blood lead levels of 2 micrograms per deciliter<sup>1</sup> provide a stronger scientific case for the need to minimize lead exposure to children than when the standard was first promulgated in 1990.

Moreover, any expectation that individual states or local governments could manage lead emissions from facilities is unreasonable. States, in general, have neither the resources nor necessarily the expertise needed to adequately evaluate individual lead sources and promulgate controls. Thus, communities with high ambient air levels of lead are likely to persist and perhaps worsen in the absence of a lead NAAQS.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Gilbert SG, Weiss B. A rationale for lowering the blood lead action level from 10 to 2 microg/dL. *Neurotoxicology*. 2006 Sep;27(5):693-701.

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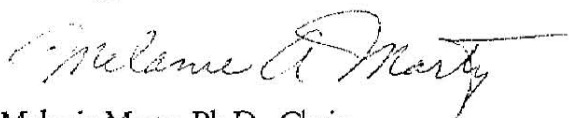
The hallmark of the national ambient air quality standard system under the Clean Air Act is two-fold: (1) it provides a vital benchmark in telling citizens across the country whether the air in their neighborhoods and communities is safe to breathe and (2) it establishes a framework for securing pollution reductions to restore healthy air. We recommend that you do not remove these vital protections for the numerous children threatened by unhealthy lead levels.

While we acknowledge the dramatic decrease in lead emissions throughout the country as the result of the removal of lead from gasoline and other agency interventions, we note that there are still at least nine communities across the United States with levels of lead in air (based on second maximum values)<sup>2</sup> at or around  $0.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , the lower limit of the lead standard under consideration in 1990, the last time the lead NAAQS was reviewed. We are deeply concerned that children in these and other communities could be exposed to unhealthy lead levels as the result of rescinding the lead NAAQS.

The CHPAC is also concerned about the transparency and integrity of the new process being used to develop the lead NAAQS. Unlike the previous process, which included a staff paper that had clear ranges and recommendations from the professional scientific staff of the agency, the document produced by this new process has no set of recommendations, but only refers to potential actions under consideration. We urge the Administrator to re-instate the clarity, scientific rigor and opportunity for public review and input that the previous NAAQS process afforded by providing for clear staff recommendations along with early input by the public and the Agency's own scientific advisory committees.

We thank you in advance for considering these comments and would be happy to discuss them with you or your staff.

Sincerely,



Melanie Marty, Ph.D., Chair  
Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee

Cc:

William Wehrum, Designated Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation  
Steven Page, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards  
Lydia Wegman, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards  
Dr. William Sanders, Interim Director, Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education

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<sup>2</sup>The nine communities are Troy, AL, Tampa FL, Muncie IN, Iron and Jefferson Counties, MO, Wallkill, NY, Laureldale, PA, Williamson County, TN, Collin County, TX.; data from <http://www.epa.gov/air/data/index.html>.