

**Hearing of the Senate Committee on Environment and  
Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety**

***Examining Pathways Towards Compliance of the National Ambient Air Quality  
Standard for Ground-Level Ozone: Legislative Hearing on S. 2882 and S.2072***

**June 22, 2016, 2:30 PM  
Room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building**

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**Introduction**

Good afternoon Madam Chair, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Kurt Karperos. I am a Deputy Executive Officer for the California Air Resources Board.

In this role, I am responsible for implementation of the Clean Air Act statewide, 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 are the nation's only areas that EPA has designated as extreme nonattainment for ozone.

Today I want to cover three points in my testimony.

First, meeting federal health-based standards for air quality is achievable in California, including the San Joaquin Valley and the South Coast.

Second, economic growth and development while taking steps to reduce emissions is not only possible, it is a reality in California.

And third, delaying the standards, as Senate bills 2882 and 2072 would do, is unnecessary and will negatively impact the health and well-being of millions of people.

### **Public Health Imperative**

About one third of California's 38 million residents live in regions with pollution levels that exceed the standard.

That includes almost 5 million children, with nearly a half-million suffering from asthma.

California supported EPA's setting of the more health-protective ozone standard because reaching that standard will reduce premature mortality, emergency rooms 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-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.

Continued progress has occurred in the San Joaquin Valley. This extreme nonattainment area now meets the 1-hour ozone standard, and just last week the San Joaquin Valley adopted a plan to meet the 8-hour standard. This is an important accomplishment for the Valley.

The South Coast is more challenging, but progress is also significant. The region once measured 1-hour ozone values above the standard on over 200 days per year. Today it has dropped to 10. Similarly, the number of days over the 8-hour standards has been cut in half since 1990.

This progress has occurred at the same time that California's population has increased 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 reducing emissions, California's economy has continued to grow and prosper. Over the last year, California grew to be the world's sixth largest economy, and job growth in the State over the last 12 months was 2.8 percent, outpacing the national rate of 1.9 percent.

This while pursuing the nation's most aggressive air quality and climate policies.

Today, the air pollution control industry in California generates approximately 6 billion dollars a year and employs over 30,000 people. The clean energy sector generates an additional 27 billion dollars a year and employs approximately 125,000 people.

Looking forward, EPA estimates that achieving the new 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 impacts of pollution.

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

With its health-based air quality standards, meaningful deadlines, and requirements for comprehensive plans, the Clean Air Act has been the tool for achieving this combined air quality and economic success.

The Clean Air Act requires early, comprehensive planning. Delay can increase cost, and California uses the early planning required by the Clean Air Act as a tool to minimize costs in the long-term.

In fact, California will adopt a plan this year that will not only provide the reductions needed to meet the 75 parts per billion ozone standard in 2031, including in the San Joaquin Valley, it will also provide most of the emissions reductions needed for the new 70 parts per billion ozone standard in 2037.

California has used the advanced technology provisions of the Act to drive innovation, using incentives to bring cost-effective technologies to market. Electric cars are the prime example.

And now, California is working with EPA to demonstrate that trucks can be 90 percent cleaner by optimizing the technologies already on trucks today.

Finally, working with EPA, business, and the public, we take advantage of the flexibility of the Clean Air Act to tailor control strategies to best fit California.

### **Changes to the Clean Air Act are Unnecessary**

California's success is proof that Senate bills 2882 and 2072 are unnecessary.

The bills would mean more people would breathe dirty air longer because they push off deadlines, erode requirements for incremental progress, and undermine the Clean Air Act's requirements for comprehensive air quality strategies.

Senate bill 2882 would inappropriately insert control costs into EPA's science-based process for setting air quality standards. How healthful our air needs to be is not a function of the cost to clean it up; it's a function of what air pollution does to the human body.

### **Closing**

In closing, let me stress that meeting the federal health-based ozone standards is achievable.

Clean Air Act provisions provide the needed flexibility to effectively accomplish these goals, including in the areas with the nation's most persistent pollution problems.

Second, setting healthful air against economic prosperity is a false choice, as California has continued to demonstrate that reducing emissions 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 and environmental pollution, so it is especially critical to continue progress in that region. In addition, the economic costs of healthcare associated with polluted air are substantial, and far exceeds the costs of using cleaner technologies.

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