Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C., 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

We are concerned that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed new ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) before completing implementation of the existing ozone standards. Between 1980 and 2013, U.S. Gross Domestic Product, population, and energy consumption grew substantially, while air emissions dropped significantly. Moving forward, EPA projects air quality will continue to substantially improve over the next ten years through various federal controls including state and industry efforts to implement the current 2008 ozone standard. EPA can support economic growth while continuing the decades-long trend towards cleaner air by maintaining the existing 75 ppb ozone standard and allowing time for our constituents to fully implement current clean air requirements.

EPA data indicates that the air is cleaner today than it has been in thirty years, progress due in large part to control measures associated with past NAAQS standards. This success shows that ozone NAAQS when given an opportunity to be fully implemented produce significant reductions. Companies seeking to build or expand facilities invest significantly in control processes. If a proposed standard cannot be met, nonattainment areas would be required to implement costly ozone-reduction measures and permitting requirements that could prove technologically difficult. Moreover, EPA acknowledges that there are alternative views on health effects evidence and risk information. Due to all these uncertainties, allowing the current standard to take full effect would alleviate any perceived concerns with measured scientific data and allow EPA time to further consider those uncertainties while still protecting air quality.

EPA's ozone rules affect all aspects of our communities and municipalities, including consumers and vital industries. EPA openly acknowledges that to meet national air quality standards a partnership is required between the federal government, states, localities and industry. Yet, the timing of EPA's proposal could strain state and local government resources. EPA delayed implementing the current 2008 standard for two years while it decided whether to reconsider that standard. EPA is just now providing states with guidance to implement the 2008 standard, and the state-federal clean air partnership should be allowed an opportunity to work.

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Indeed, states are currently investing substantial administrative resources to make up lost time. It could prove burdensome to force states to implement a new ozone standard at the same time they are only starting to implement the current one. We believe allowing sufficient time for existing measures to take hold, before setting a new ozone standard, would yield the desired results EPA is currently seeking.

While we recognize that EPA is under court order to complete its review of the ozone NAAQS, EPA has requested comment on maintaining the existing standard. We believe the full implementation of a standard of 75 ppb is in line with EPA goals and the ideals set forth under the Clean Air Act and, could possibly, by the next five year review, achieve lower emissions standards than originally sought. It is clear from the past that ozone standards can only achieve the desired results if they are allowed time to be fully implemented. EPA should keep in mind the newly laid out requirements in the delayed 2008 ozone NAAQS when considering whether to finalize a new, potentially stricter, standard. Therefore, we request EPA allow time for the benefits of the current ozone standard to become effective by retaining the current ozone standard.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress

Jim Bridenstine
Member of Congress

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

Reid Ribble
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Morgan Griffith
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Bill Johnson
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Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress

Frank Lucas
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Rodney Davis
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Garrett Graves
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Ruben Hinojosa
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Richard Hudson
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Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress

David McKinley
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Steve Chabot
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Henry Cuellar
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Jim Renacci
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Ralph Abraham
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Steve Knight
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Gary Palmer
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Mike Bost
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Thomas Massie
Member of Congress

Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

Earl "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions
Member of Congress

Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress

Bill Flores
Member of Congress

Scott Perry
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Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

John Fleming, MD
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Duncan Hunter
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Brian Babin
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Bob Gibbs
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Bradley Byrne
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Rod Blum
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