

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our deep disappointment, which we believe is shared by millions of Americans, regarding your Administration's decision to delay a much-needed and scientifically justified update to the nation's smog pollution standard under the Clean Air Act. We also write to encourage you to protect the Clean Air Act going forward, and to build on its successful, 40-year demonstrated record of protecting public health and the environment, driving innovation, and creating jobs.

We are disappointed with the decision to cancel the smog pollution standard because it clearly offered strong public health benefits and the opportunity to invest in job creation. A new smog pollution standard would protect the public from serious health risks. According to the American Lung Association and the EPA, these risks include increased asthma attacks, increased hospitalizations for people with lung disease, and even premature death from heart or lung disease. Children and seniors are particularly vulnerable to harmful health impacts from breathing smog. At the same time, a new smog pollution standard would provide an opportunity for our nation to invest in new clean air technologies that reduce pollution, creating jobs as we upgrade and modernize our energy infrastructure.

Big polluters are claiming a "victory" by delaying action on smog pollution. Their "victory" is certainly not a victory for families across the nation when the facts show that environmental laws benefit our economy and create jobs.

Since the Clean Air Act was signed into law in 1970, we have reduced air pollution from the six common pollutants (including smog) by 63 percent, while at the same time growing our economy by 210 percent and adding more than 60 million jobs. Thanks to environmental laws like the Clean Air Act, we have created millions of jobs in pollution control and environmental technologies industries, and the United States exports tens of billions of dollars of pollution control technologies annually.

Going forward, we are hopeful that your Administration will focus on the benefits of implementing long-needed clean air protections. We strongly support your Administration's steps to improve air quality, and promote clean technology industries and domestic jobs through higher fuel economy standards, as well as your steps to set new standards to protect states that are downwind of air pollution. We look forward to working with the Administration to build on this record by ensuring that a strong, science-based public health standard for smog pollution is implemented as soon as possible.

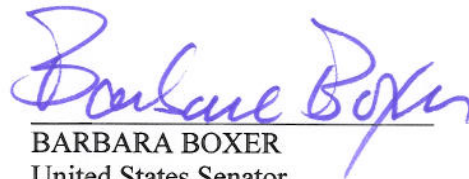
More broadly, we appreciate your recent statement that you would work to vigorously defend the Clean Air Act and other critical environmental laws that are under withering attack by polluters. We will stand with you as the Administration presses forward with long-awaited efforts to cut toxic air pollution from power plants, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and refineries under the Clean Air Act. We will also support the EPA as it protects our air and water.

These are fights worth waging, and fights we must win for our children and our families. With all of the negative attacks coming from big polluters, we feel it is essential to reaffirm that the American people overwhelmingly support clean air and clean water protections, and care deeply about protecting our environment.

Sincerely,



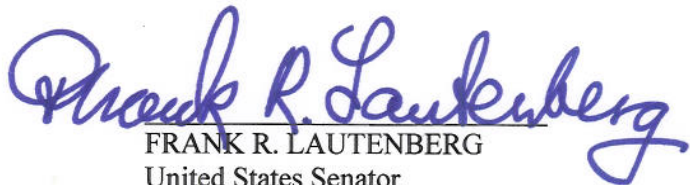
BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



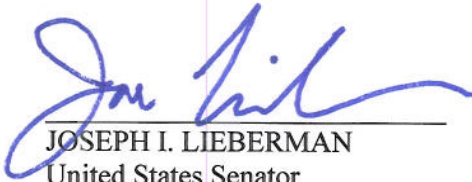
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