
ONTARIO CONTINUES TO CALL FOR STRICTER U.S. SMOG RULES

McGuinty Government Supports Legal Action Against EPA Ozone Standards

NEWS

July 29, 2008

Ontario is continuing its opposition to new, weak U.S. ozone standards by supporting legal action against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

On Friday, Ontario advised the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in Washington, D.C. that it will file an amicus brief in the ozone standards case now before the court. The brief will lay out Ontario's concerns about the health and environmental impacts of ozone and transboundary air pollution.

Ontario's brief will support legal action brought by 14 states, two cities and five non-governmental health and environment organizations against the EPA to seek stricter standards. The court has not set a date for when the brief will be filed.

The EPA has set new ambient air quality standards for ozone of 75 parts per billion (ppb), reduced from the previous level of 80 ppb. The Canada-Wide Standard for ozone is 65 ppb. In September 2007, Ontario submitted comments to the EPA, urging it to adopt standards at least as stringent as the Canada-Wide Standard. However, in March 2008, the EPA adopted the weaker 75 ppb standard, a decision contrary to the unanimous advice of the agency's own Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee.

The U.S. interests supported by Ontario in the call for more stringent ozone standards are: New York, California (plus the California Air Resources Board), Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, District of Columbia and City of New York. The non-governmental organizations are the American Lung Association, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resource Defense Council, National Parks Conservation Association and Appalachian Mountain Club.

QUOTES

"Ground-level ozone is a serious threat to our health and our environment," said Environment Minister John Gerretsen. "We simply want the U.S. to adopt stronger ozone standards to better protect citizens on both sides of the border."

"People living with asthma and chronic lung disease are more at risk from exposure to ground level ozone than the general population. However, even healthy people can be affected by the smog episodes experienced in Ontario," said George Habib, president and CEO of the Ontario Lung Association. "Given that U.S. sources contribute about 50 per cent of Ontario's smog, Ontario's efforts to improve its air quality need to be supported by similar U.S. actions."

“The American Lung Association welcomes Ontario in the fight to protect us all from the dangers of ozone air pollution,” said Bernadette Toomey, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Lung Association. “Ozone smog knows no boundaries. Americans and Canadians alike suffer from the life-threatening harm from this pollution. All of us need the safeguards of truly protective ozone standards. “

QUICK FACTS

- There is no safe level of smog. Ground-level ozone, a major component of smog, can result in significant adverse health effects for the elderly, children and those with cardiovascular or respiratory illnesses. It also causes damage to crops, vegetation and forested areas.
- The brief is called an amicus brief, short for *Amicus Curiae*, or Friend of the Court.
- Ontario wants stronger standards in the U.S. in order to reduce ozone levels here. On average, transboundary air pollution is responsible for about half of Ontario’s smog.

LEARN MORE

[Transboundary Air Pollution](#)
[Ontario’s Go Green Plan for Climate Change](#)

[Ontario’s 2007 comments to the EPA](#)

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