As Prepared for Delivery
Comments of Liz Scott
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On
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Control of Air Pollution From New Motor Vehicles: Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Standards Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
Docket ID No. EPA–HQ–OAR– 2019–0055

April 13, 2022

Good morning. My name is Liz Scott and I'm the National Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association's Healthy Air Campaign. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for making sign-ups to this hearing more accessible. I'm here to join my colleagues and others in calling for strong NOx emissions standards for trucks to be finalized this year.

Strengthening NOx standards to the strongest possible scenario – which is Option 1 – will yield substantial health benefits. The proposal calculates up to 2,100 fewer premature deaths, 78,000 fewer lost workdays and 1.1 million fewer missed school days. These benefits are achievable if EPA finalizes Option 1 by the end of this calendar year. To see even greater health benefits, however, EPA must also move quickly to finalize future standards that fully drive the transition to zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles.

Last month, the American Lung Association released "Zeroing in on Healthy Air", a report that looked at the health and climate benefits of a nationwide transition to zero-emission light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles powered by zero-emission electricity. I want to spend the remainder of my time talking about the findings of that report to help paint a picture of what a pollution-free transportation sector would achieve.

If all light-duty vehicle sales were zero-emission by 2035 and all medium and heavy-duty vehicles sales were zero-emission by 2040, and they were powered by non-combustion electricity, 110,000 premature deaths would be prevented between 2020 and 2050. In that same time frame, $1.2 trillion in health benefits and $1.7 trillion in climate benefits could be achieved. Every state stands to benefit from such a transition. The report found that more than half of U.S. states could see more than $10 billion in cumulative health benefits. California and Texas could see over $100 billion, and Pennsylvania, Florida, Ohio, New York, Illinois and Michigan could see over $50 billion.

Pollution levels would drop dramatically. Under a zero-emission transportation and electricity scenario, NOx pollution and greenhouse gases from the heavy-duty sector would be reduced by 92% by 2050. Fine particulate pollution, which can damage the respiratory and cardiovascular systems among other health harms, would be reduced by 68%.

It's well documented by now that communities of color face a disproportionate risk of breathing in dangerous transportation pollution due to their proximity to major roads and other transportation hubs.

The report looked at the 100 U.S. counties with the highest percentage of people of color. While these counties made up just 3% of all U.S. counties, they would see 13% of the national benefits. Transitioning to a zero-emission transportation sector is a necessary step to right environmental injustices.

We don't have to wait until 2050 to realize these health benefits. The report found that annual health benefits of zero-emission vehicles and electricity could hit nearly $28 billion in 2030. We have the technology to make this transition possible. EPA must strengthen and finalize Option 1 of this proposal this calendar year and then quickly move towards stronger standards and a zero-emission transportation sector that can achieve the benefits I've outlined here.

Thank you for your time.