

To: Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Mail Code 1101A, Washington, DC 20460

We write to express our deep concern with the recent dismissal of the Particulate Matter Review Panel, a long-standing and indispensable group of technical experts reporting to the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC).

For the past 40 years, the United States has been well-served by independent, data-driven science, and this has enabled the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to meet part of its fundamental mission by protecting the public from air pollution. Non-political, fact-guided examination by scientific experts, such as those formerly comprising the Particulate Matter Review Panel, is essential for the EPA to receive the best scientific advice needed to protect public health. This process has always taken place in a transparent environment in order for all voices to be considered and decisions to be grounded in evidence.

The science of particulate matter's impact on public health is a complex one that requires a qualified panel of experts. Particulate matter is an especially complicated pollutant because, unlike other EPA criteria pollutants, it is comprised of a mixture of many different chemical compounds that vary in concentration, composition, and physical size. Some of these compounds—even at low concentrations—are likely to pose disproportionate health risks to vulnerable populations throughout the country. In fact, exposure to particulate matter causes more than 88,000 early deaths¹ per year in the United States—more than firearms and motor vehicle traffic deaths combined²—and this number appears to be growing over time. New science continues to be reported each week that requires interpretation by qualified experts who can apply understanding, scrutiny, and constructive criticism to each published report.

Without sufficient expertise by qualified, independent scientists, the EPA's air pollution decisions are likely to lack the information necessary to provide an honest assessment of particulate matter impacts on health. The end result may be particulate matter standards that insufficiently protect the United States public, especially our most susceptible populations such as children and the elderly.

As professional scientists and engineers, we strongly object to sidelining science in this decisionmaking process. We strongly urge you to reinstate the Particulate Matter Review Panel to provide the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, as well as your agency, with the best-possible scientific understanding.

Sincerely,

We, the undersigned 206 scientists and engineers with expertise in air quality, environmental sciences, and public health.

¹ Cohen AJ, Brauer M, Burnett R, Anderson HR, Frostad J, Estep K, et al. 2017. Estimates and 25-year trends of the global burden of disease attributable to ambient air pollution: An analysis of data from the global burden of diseases study 2015. *Lancet* 389:1907-1918.

² Murphy SL, Xu J, Kochanek KD, Curtin SC, Arias E. 2017. National Vital Statistics Reports: Deaths: Final Data for 2015. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vol 66 No 6. Online at https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr66/nvsr66_06.pdf.

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