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## Nearly one-third of Ohio could fail minimum air quality standards

### U.S. EPA using science to best protect the public's health

Columbus, OH – The OEC is calling on the U.S EPA to adopt the 60 parts per billion standard. All levels of government can take actions in protecting the public's health.

The U.S. EPA has proposed that 32 of Ohio's counties be listed as failing to meet federal air quality standards for ozone pollution. The EPA is adjusting an earlier decision that set the pollution limit at 75 parts per billion to a level between 60 and 70 parts per billion, which would increase the number of Ohio's failing counties from 0 to 32.

"The US EPA is doing the right thing by re-examining the ozone pollution standard," states David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air and Water Special Projects for the Ohio Environmental Council. "A less restrictive standard would sacrifice the public's health."

Under the Bush Administration, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee recommended that the U.S. EPA adopt a standard between 60 and 70 parts per billion. The US EPA did not take this recommendation and adopted a more lenient one of 75 parts per billion, under President Bush.

Ground level ozone is generated by emissions from cars, diesel engines, and factories that are cooked by the sun. According to medical scientists, ground-level ozone has serious health and environmental impacts including:

- Airway irritation, coughing, and pain when taking a deep breath;
- Wheezing and breathing difficulties during exercise or outdoor activities;
- Inflammation;
- Aggravation of asthma;
- Permanent lung damage; and
- Reduction of forest growth and crop yields.

According to the Clean Air Task Force, diesel pollution alone costs Ohio \$5.1 billion annually. A tighter standard on ozone pollution could reduce that cost while developing innovative means to meet the new standard.

“The Ohio EPA needs to stand up for what is right to protect Ohio’s most vulnerable residents. Clean air solutions can protect our health, environment, and make us economically competitive,” states Celebrezze.

Local government should:

- Adopt an internal no-idling policy for its vehicle fleets.
- Retrofit existing vehicles with pollution controls.
- Adopt a fuel conservation ordinance which limits the amount of time any vehicle can idle in a 60 minute time period.

The state should:

- Require equipment and vehicles used at construction projects to install modern pollution controls.
- Support a tighter limit on ozone and particle pollution standards.
- Fund the Ohio Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program at \$50 million a year.

The Federal government should:

- Require large construction projects to install modern pollution controls.
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- Fund the Diesel Emission Reduction Act to \$1 billion a year.

“Tough economic times is no time to cut corners with public health.” Celebrezze continues, “Any visit to the emergency room costs us in both work productivity and quality of life.”

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The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio’s leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio’s families and communities. For more information, visit [www.theOEC.org](http://www.theOEC.org).