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American Lung Association applauds greenhouse gas plan as right prescription for global warming problem

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - December 10, 2008 - The American Lung Association of California announced its support for the state plan to control global warming pollution to be voted on Thursday, December 11, by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and called on the board to adopt several strengthening improvements to better protect the lung and public health of all Californians.

“The Scoping Plan provides the right prescription for the critical public health problem of global warming,” said Tony Gerber, MD, an American Lung Association of California volunteer, pulmonary specialist and assistant professor at the University of California, San Francisco. “Everyone who is concerned about breathing polluted air in California should be supporting a strong global warming plan,” said Gerber.

The measures in the plan are critical not only to reducing California’s carbon footprint, but also to reduce smog, soot and toxic air contaminants that plague communities across the state.

“The connection between global warming and poor air quality is real and threatening to the health of all Californians,” said American Lung Association of California’s President and CEO Jim Wilgus.

“Of course we’re most concerned about vulnerable populations such as the elderly, infants and children, people with existing lung conditions like asthma, people with heart disease, and low income communities,” said Gerber. “But even healthy children and adults are harmed by poor air quality.”

Children in polluted areas can be significantly affected, particularly because they have high breathing rates, spend more time outdoors and their lungs are still developing.

“It’s scary to think that children in some areas of California are already suffering from stunted lung development as well as some of the highest asthma rates in the country,” said Gerber.

With asthma at epidemic levels and thousands of premature deaths, hospitalizations and illnesses caused by air pollution each year, California must take the strongest possible action to control global warming and protect vulnerable populations.

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To boost the health benefits of the state's global warming plan, the American Lung Association of California calls on CARB to incorporate the following changes:

- **Expand Public Health Role** - Establish a formal process for state and local public health agencies and organizations in the evaluation and implementation of greenhouse gas reduction strategies included in the scoping plan, including regulatory and market strategies.
- **Strengthen Land Use Provisions** – CARB should increase the state target for emission reductions in the land use and transportation sector above the 5 million metric ton level in the proposed plan. These changes will promote healthier communities through providing more transportation options such as walking, biking and public transit.
- **Ensure Community Benefits** - Establish strong community benefit provisions including a process to direct fees raised through cap and trade programs to community-level mitigation programs to reduce greenhouse gases and assist in adaptation efforts, especially in environmental justice areas.
- **Strengthen Industrial Measures** - CARB should set a stronger goal for greenhouse gas reductions from the industrial sector. These facilities, including petroleum refineries and cement manufacturing facilities, not only are large sources of greenhouse gas emissions but they have serious localized impacts.
- **Pursue 100% Auction and Substantially Limit Offsets** – Strengthen CARB's commitment to pursue 100% auction of emission allocations and require substantial restrictions on use of offsets (emission reductions achieved from activities not otherwise regulated or included under an emissions cap). Limiting offsets is critical to ensuring the plan achieves the greatest local air quality and community benefits and preserves the incentive for California industries to upgrade facilities to use less carbon intensive technologies.

The public health crisis in California caused by the state's dependence on polluting petroleum fuels requires the strongest possible greenhouse gas reduction measures.

“We're pleased that the California Air Resources Board is taking strong leadership on global warming, and we want to help improve the plan and boost the public health benefits,” said Wilgus.

About the American Lung Association

Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. The American Lung Association funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is “*Improving life, one breath at a time.*” For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1.800.LUNG.USA (1.800.586.4872) or log on to www.lungusa.org.

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