

2 December 2024

Re: Case R24-17: Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition/Sierra Club Public
Testimony to the Illinois Pollution Control Board

Submitted by: Lawrence Pfafflin, Elmhurst Illinois, private citizen

* My city of Elmhurst is bounded and crisscrossed by interstate and major arterial roads. Asthma levels are high and AQI levels are far above national averages. Neighboring communities like Bellwood, Hillside and Berkley are similarly affected. Truck and train traffic in the adjacent Proviso rail yards, massive new package delivery centers, and O'hare cargo terminals contribute heavily to the local transportation emissions mix.

* Measurable AQI progress has been made, but seems to have reached a plateau. Asthma rates as of the IDH 2017 report had not changed over the 6 years studied and disproportionately affect women and black residents, with women being about twice as likely to have asthma! My daughters related that inhalers were very common among their school teammates and one of my girls has respiratory problems and has moved away.

* Highway traffic and congestion continue to increase. Chicagoans now have commute times among the highest in the US. Added lanes fill up quickly, and on I294 south, the entire eastern border of Elmhurst is a continual line of stop-and-go truck traffic queued up for the I88 west ramp. This creates the worst possible emissions scenario. The Hillside Strangler didn't leave; it cloned, moved east and west and got meaner.

* The traffic and AQI situation could change very rapidly, and not for the better. A push for fewer imports will mean more local production and distribution, creating even more local traffic. Climate related migration from some areas will inevitably create urban expansion and infill and more transportation demand in our area. The new I490 Tollway project is designed to increase and enhance cargo traffic at O'Hare.

* Restoring and maintaining healthy air quality requires modernizing the vehicle fleet through the adoption and implementation of the proposed standards in the ACT and ACC II Standards. When Illinois adopts the ACC II standard, joining the 14 states on the list, nearly 44 percent of US GDP will be represented per US BEA 2023 numbers. Similar figures support the ACT. There is strength in numbers, especially in the current federal political climate!

* Illinois is a leader in clean vehicle production, let's reinforce our own success!

* The transportation industry will note increased maintenance costs as a key objection the ACT and ACC II, but those costs pale in comparison to the impact on OUR maintenance costs when our health and wellbeing are considered. When local citizens scrape up enough money to buy an inhaler, or expensive furnace filter or air cleaning system we are paying for the damage done to our air.