



December 2, 2024
Illinois Pollution Control Board
60 E. Van Buren St., Ste. 630
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Comments in Support of Proposed Clean Car and Truck Standards (R2024-017)

My name is Dr. Keith Bakken, and I am writing as a professor of nursing and health sciences at North Park University in Chicago and a Local Leadership Board Member of the American Lung Association in Greater Chicago. We thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of adopting the proposed clean car and truck standards, which are critical to reducing air pollution in Illinois.

During my 34 years practicing as a nurse prior to going into academia, the most difficult experiences for me was witnessing patients struggle to breathe. I often treated people who were connected to ventilators unable to breathe on their own, some of whom ultimately lost their lives. As a nurse, I learned firsthand the importance of prevention and protecting the air we breathe. Now as an educator, I am helping to prepare the next generation of leaders in the nursing profession and health sciences to work towards improving the health of the public.

Given transportation continues to be a leading source of harmful air and climate emissions in Illinois, I support the adoption of the clean vehicle standards—the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT), Heavy-Duty Low-NOx Omnibus (HDO) and Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCI)—because of the air quality and lung health benefits these standards will provide for my patients and the communities. As a nurse, I saw a significant number of patients who were negatively affected by air pollution, which can directly damage people’s lungs and even lead to early death. Poor air quality increases the chances that acute health issues will arise, adding further to the burden for people with lung conditions and their families.

Despite making up 6 percent of the on-road fleet in 2020, medium and heavy-duty vehicles generate 59 percent of ozone and particle-forming NOx emissions and 55 percent of particle pollution. The ACT and HDO are targeted particularly at addressing these high impact pollution sources and will support a long-term market signal to reduce this major source of unhealthy pollution.

Air pollution affects the health of everyone, but is particularly harmful for children, seniors, and people with pre-existing conditions, and disproportionately impacts people with lower incomes and people of color who are more likely to live near transportation corridors. Ozone (“smog”) and particle (“soot”) pollutants can cause various respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses such as asthma attacks, worsening COPD, heart attacks, and strokes.

As a healthcare professional, my colleagues and I must provide healthcare and education around the consequences of poor air quality. This means that we experience and are acutely aware of the immediate and long-term effects of poor air quality. In our professional lives, we work to advise patients on options to mitigate exposure to poor air quality, which for some, might mean skipping a soccer game or avoiding playing in the playground closest to a family's home.

In conclusion, I strongly support the request in the petition to adopt clean vehicle standards. Feel free to contact me should you have any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Keith Bakken, DNP, MSN, BSN
Professor of Nursing and Health Sciences
North Park University



Greater Chicago Local Leadership Board Member
American Lung Association