

August 29, 2022

U.S. E.P.A. CASAC Ozone Review Panel regarding ozone NAAQS reconsideration.

Dr. Jane Orient's Verbal Comment to the Ozone Review Panel

I am Jane Orient, M.D., a practicing internist and president of Doctors for Disaster Preparedness. This organization was founded in the 1980s to provide the public with lifesaving information regarding hazards to their life and health. We have also focused on panic, hysteria, and the severe damage that can be done by counterproductive rules and regulations based on flawed risk assessment.

We believe it is the responsibility of the committee to do more than just sit and listen to three-to-five minute presentations, but to actually respond to the serious scientific issues that have been raised, particularly by Dr. James Enstrom. We have seen no substantive response to his extensive analysis.

We are opposed to this premature review of the ozone standards. We believe that the current low levels of PM2.5s and ozone in our atmosphere are of no significant hazard to health at present. There is no scientific evidence of any damage at these negligible levels. Any benefits to health are based on models that have not been validated. The scientific flaws include no actual measurements of exposures, but simple assumptions that do not take into account that most people's time is spent primarily indoors at far lower levels. Models ignore many confounding variables, most particularly allergens, which are by far the most important factor in precipitating asthma. They also ignore smoking, vaping, marijuana use, and all kinds of preexisting conditions.

The cost of these interventions is completely neglected.

I believe that the EPA should be obligated to consider both the risks of a policy as well as the hypothetical benefits. The risks are real and severe, and, as several presenters have testified, the impact falls most heavily on the Black community and other marginalized groups. These are not simply economic costs, but costs in human life and health. Impoverishment and despair due to loss of livelihood take a big toll on one's health. We must also consider not only the harm to truck drivers and other low-wage workers, but also loss of the very valuable services that they provide. We are absolutely dependent upon our fellow citizens' ability to grow things, mine things, manufacture goods, and transport them.

Electric vehicles cannot fill in the gap. Assertions that they can do so ignore the energy and environmental costs of producing them, disposing of the batteries after their useful life, and generating and transmitting the electricity that charges them.

These regulations assume that a “climate emergency” exists and that these rules could somehow affect it. Kathleen Wells at this hearing pointed out that 1,200 scientists have signed a declaration that there is no climate emergency. We would remind you that some decades ago more than 31,000 scientists signed a very strong petition that carbon dioxide was not producing and could not produce catastrophic effects on the climate, but that the rising concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was actually of great benefit to plant and animal life (www.petitionproject.org). This is why greenhouse owners buy CO₂, and why the earth appears noticeably greener from space since atmospheric CO₂ concentration has increased.

Even if the greenhouse gas models were valid and their predictions had not consistently failed, their own calculations predict a negligible effect on global temperature from draconian reduction of global energy use. Moreover, California is a very small part of the earth, and even completely crushing its economy would be meaningless in view of emissions from heavily polluting industries in China, India, and many other parts of the world.

We object to the agency’s failure to abide by the Administrative Procedures Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act in its dictatorial imposition of these major rules that have an enormous impact on everyone’s life, without accountability or checks and balances.

We are very skeptical that a slight decrease in already low levels of ozone will have a meaningful effect on species of plants in Appalachia, while the restrictions required to achieve this effect would be extremely damaging to the lives and livelihoods of hardworking Americans. There is no moral, constitutional, legal, or financial justification for harming Los Angeles truck drivers for this purely hypothetical benefit to plants.

DDP opposes the proposed tightening of existing standards. There is no scientific justification, and the certain harm to humans, especially to the most vulnerable, vastly exceeds any hypothetical benefits.