

NAACP SUPPORTS FULL ENFORCEMENT OF THE CLEAN AIR ACT

WHEREAS NAACP has committed to Resolutions on Environmental and Climate Justice in 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2009; and

WHEREAS, on July 17, 2011, the NAACP released a seminal report entitled "Coal Blooded: Putting Profits Before People" which clearly demonstrates the impact of coal pollution on our entire nation as well as racial and ethnic minorities; and

WHEREAS approximately 71% of African Americans live in areas in violation of air pollution standards, race, over income, is the #1 predictor of whether a person is located near a polluting facility, an African American making \$50,000 per year is more likely to live in an area cited for air pollution than a white American making \$15,000 per year;

WHEREAS coal combustion also emits mercury, arsenic, lead, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide, toxins that are linked to birth defects, learning challenges and ADD, and respiratory illnesses such as asthma, COPD, and lung cancer;

WHEREAS mercury from these power plants accumulates in local waterways and poses a direct risk to people when they eat contaminated fish and a study in Detroit found that African Americans are disproportionately negatively impacted by the risk of eating fish contaminated with mercury because of high levels of subsistence fishing and lack of information on fish advisories;

WHEREAS a report on power plant pollution found that emissions from all power plants in the U.S. (both coal and other fuel sources) are responsible for 30,000 premature deaths, 7,000 asthma-related emergency room visits, and 18,000 cases of chronic bronchitis each year, asthma affects African Americans at a 36 percent higher rate of incidence than White Americans and African Americans are hospitalized for asthma at three times the rate of White Americans and die of asthma at twice the rate of White Americans;

WHEREAS, the National Academies of Science's Institute of Medicine's (IOM's) Committee on Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2020 has sited physical environments that promote good health as one of the top five overarching goals and reduction in the number of days the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds 100 as leading objective of Healthy People in 2020;

WHEREAS emission of greenhouse gases is the leading driver of climate change;

WHEREAS Coal combustion is the #2 largest producer greenhouse gases and is responsible for 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

WHEREAS from cradle to grave, ground to ash, the damages coal causes to our environment and society are enormous, according to EPA, the average health risks to the public due to metals (including arsenic, nickel, chromium and selenium) from power plant waste disposal units could be up to 10,000 times higher than EPA's allowable risk levels for cancer and other illnesses, children living in the vicinity of power plants have the highest health risks, adults are

also at risk from contaminated groundwater and from inhaling dust from the facility, mineworkers and their families also often reside in the communities where the coal is being mined, additional health risks and dangers to residents of coal mining communities include injuries and fatalities related to the collapse of highwalls, roads and homes adjacent to or above coal seams being mined; the blasting of flyrock offsite onto a homeowner's land or public roadway; injury and/or suffocation at abandoned mine sites; and the inhalation of airborne fine dust particles off-site;

WHEREAS the increase and the severity of extreme weather events that result from Climate Change disproportionately impacts African American communities because of pre-existing economic, social and political vulnerabilities;

WHEREAS the decrease in agricultural yields that results from climate change disproportionately impacts African Americans who already suffer from high rates of hunger and obesity through challenged access to affordable, nutritious foods;

WHEREAS there are healthy and sustainable alternatives to the current overreliance on coal for energy; and

WHEREAS, meaningful climate change policy can create real public benefits including millions of good green-collar jobs and build an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty.

WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soon to come out with updated Ozone standards this summer based on evidence from over 1,700 studies of the health impacts of ozone which concludes that between 4,000 and 12,000 lives could be saved each year by cleaning up ozone pollution to 60 ppb, a 60 ppb standard will prevent 58,000 asthma attacks and 21,000 hospital and emergency room visits annually;

WHEREAS, this year the EPA is slated to release the first proposed New Source Performance Standards for power plants and refineries which target the two largest industrial sources of pollution, would be the first ever limits on green house gas pollutants from these sectors;

WHEREAS, this year the EPA proposed a critical air quality standard to protect Americans against life-threatening air pollution such as mercury and arsenic from power plants which, based on state-of-the-art technology, will prevent as many as 17,000 premature deaths and 11,000 heart attacks a year, prevent 120,000 asthma attacks and about 11,000 cases of acute bronchitis among children annually; and

WHEREAS, the National Environmental and Climate Justice Program of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has conducted teach-ins and town hall meetings to educate 21 local units and their communities about the hazards of the coal fired power plants in their communities, has mobilized over 200 comments from these local communities to be submitted to EPA on the Mercury and Air Toxics Rule; and

WHEREAS, congress has, in 2011, launched several attacks with increasing ferocity on the Clean Air Act and on the ability of the U.S. EPA to enforce strong protections

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NAACP will call on our nation's elected leaders to support the Clean Air Act and efforts to improve it, oppose efforts to weaken it, postpone, or prevent implementation of the Clean Air Act, undermine the ability to guarantee clean air and healthy communities for this generation and the next;


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NAACP will support efforts which mitigate impact of coal pollution, including negotiating with plant owners to put in pollution controls and/or convert coal plants to clean forms of energy generation, encourage communities to invest in energy efficiency methods so that such harmful processes won't be as much in demand

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NAACP supports an updated strong final Ozone rule, a standard in the 60 – 70 parts per billion(ppb) range, preferably at the lower end of the range;

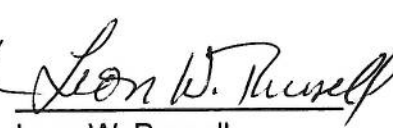
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NAACP will urge the final Mercury Air Toxics Rule to be released in November of this year;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NAACP will support units to increase community involvement in ensuring that energy related policies and practices do no harm, work with the philanthropic community to support grassroots community organizing as communities become informed and wish to take action on advancing policies and practices to ensure that the US shifts to energy efficiency and clean energy while strengthening regulations to safeguard communities from polluting facilities; and


BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the NAACP will support its units in working to improve corporate responsibility in energy production by ensuring that risks are mitigated while community economic and energy needs are being met.



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