



ANA-Maine

Juliana L'Heureux, BS, MHSA, RN

c/o One Turkey Run Topsham ME 04086

Email: juliana.lheureux@anamaine.org

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Testimony in opposition to Maine leaving the Ozone Transport Region.

I am a registered nurse who is opposed to Maine being removed from the Ozone Transport Region (OTR).

For decades, Maine has worked regionally with other states to reduce air pollution through an agreement called the Ozone Transport Region.

Ozone is a harmful pollutant and causes exacerbating and sometimes fatal impacts on people's health. Ozone is a form of pollution that causes smog, which harms our lungs. Maine has worked with 11 other states to our west and south to successfully reduce ozone levels. But, the pollutant remains problematic, especially in the summer when the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (EPA) issues warnings about high ozone levels that put people, especially children and the elderly, at risk for respiratory distress and, sometimes deaths.

The Environmental Protection Agency reported that ozone causes respiratory harm, such as precipitating asthma and chronic respiratory diseases, and is likely to shorten people's lives. Ozone contributes to heart attacks and strokes and may cause reproductive and developmental problems, according to the EPA's assessment.

It is wrong for the EPA to recommend that Maine leave the Ozone Transport Region. Maine meets air quality standards because of pollution control technology used both within the state and by the other states in the Ozone Transport Region. The system works because all participating states must follow the same rules.

If Maine leaves and allows new and expanding facilities to pollute more, other states can reasonably argue that they shouldn't have to meet the regional requirements either. This would result in more ozone pollution in Maine, a huge step backward and cause harm to people with respiratory illnesses.

As a registered nurse, I have seen the impact of air pollution on children's health, especially with exacerbations of asthma. There are countless stories of children, and elderly and others who suffer because of poor air quality. Maine has taken important steps to improve the state's air quality and the Ozone Transport Region has been among the collaborative reasons for this progress.

Medical scientists are researching lifestyle ways to improve people's health and reduce the costs of caring for those with chronic illnesses. Therefore, it makes no sense to remove Maine from the OTR, when the benefits of participating continues to be justified, by improving the health benefits supported with clean air.

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