



# CITY OF BELFAST

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**Samantha Paradis**

Honorable Mayor

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Mr. Jeffrey Crawford,

My name is Samantha Paradis and I am commenting today both as the Mayor of Belfast and as a registered nurse, who sees the impacts of poor air quality on Maine residents every shift I work. I am here today to urge you to not withdraw most of Maine from the Ozone Transport Region.

As a Registered Nurse I work with patients in acute phases of asthma who present in sheer panic because it feels like they are breathing through a straw. Sometimes quick-acting rescue inhalers do not work and the patient must present for further care including steroids and nebulizer treatment and even intubation. Asthma is particularly scary for children and families. It is the top reason for missed school days.

As the Mayor of Belfast, I am concerned about rising rates of asthma and its relation to air quality. The city of Belfast is doing everything it can to help prevent further disease by transitioning to solar energy for municipal electricity but I'm worried it isn't enough to stem the tide.

Maine has some of the highest rates of asthma in the country, in large part because we are downwind of a lot of states whose pollution blows into our air and impacts our citizens' health and our environment. These are many of the same states that are in this regional agreement, the Ozone Transport Region, which Maine is proposing to leave. Maine's departure from this agreement will allow new and expanded facilities in Maine to pollute more, which will negatively impact our air quality here in Maine.

Taking most of Maine out of this agreement is a mistake with potentially great consequences. We are opening the door to the potential unraveling of this agreement, and if we create an opportunity for other states that are upwind of Maine to leave, the health and environmental consequences for Maine people will be very negative. There will be more emergency room visits, more missed school days, more hospitalizations, and more deaths related to asthma.

This agreement has been a success. Maine's air is cleaner because of it. As the federal administration rolls back clean air protections, there will certainly be an impact on the health of Maine people. We have a responsibility to the people of Maine do what we can on the state and regional level to protect Maine's air quality. Leaving this agreement would threaten our clean air and the health of Maine people. I encourage you to not take most of Maine out of this agreement.

Thank you,

Samantha Paradis