

November 4, 2015

To members of the Michigan House of Representatives
Energy Policy Committee:



Today over 40 health professionals from across the state today will be in Lansing to urge you and your colleagues to defeat House Bills 4297 and 4298. We ask that you to consider the ways that energy policy choices impact the health of people across the state. By redefining renewable energy to include burning hazardous waste, tires and railroad ties, this legislation threatens the health of Michigan children, families and seniors. The MI Air MI Health Coalition will host a press conference on the steps of the Michigan Capitol at 11:00 am to voice our concerns about this dangerous legislation.

This package of bills makes a mockery of the efforts of health care professionals, families and Michigan businesses to reduce dangerous pollution by using more real renewable energy such as wind and solar. We are disappointed that this Committee is considering a dangerous, irresponsible energy policy.

Our Coalition works with healthcare professionals that see first-hand the impact of our energy policy on the health of Michigan children, families and seniors. We urge you to reject this dangerous plan and support forward-looking legislation that will reduce dangerous pollution and protect public health.

As you are undoubtedly aware, Michigan still gets more than half of its electricity from burning coal. Burning coal emits dangerous levels of toxic substances into our air, including particulate matter, mercury, sulfur dioxide, arsenic and lead. These toxic substances are linked to four of the five leading causes of mortality in the U.S.: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic respiratory diseases, such as asthma. Polluted air has also officially been labeled a carcinogen to humans, tied to lung and urinary tract/bladder cancer. Further, there is new evidence to suggest that pregnant women that are exposed to outdoor air pollution are more likely to have a child diagnosed with autism.

Relying on dirty sources of energy that pollute our air is a burden on our health. Consider the facts:

- Michigan's asthma rate is 25% higher than the national average.
- Michigan currently [ranks 5th in the nation](#) in premature deaths, hospital admissions, and heart attacks attributed to coal-fired power plant pollution.
- More specifically, the pollution from Michigan's nine oldest coal-fired power plants has been linked to 68,000 cases of asthma attacks and 180 premature deaths each year.

Despite these grim statistics, a healthier and cleaner future is possible. The Governor has outlined a plan to increase Michigan's renewable energy standard and continue our state's progress toward significantly reducing energy waste. By transitioning to cleaner, renewable sources of energy, we can ensure that the 229,000 children and 750,000 adults in Michigan with asthma can breathe cleaner and healthier air.

We urge you to keep the health of Michiganders at the center of your debate on our state's future energy policy. There are ways to connect energy policy to health, whether it is by

increasing our state's use of clean, renewable energy, or by adding health care cost considerations to our state's energy production decision-making process. Finally, we underscore the need to include energy efficiency as a low-cost accessible solution to mitigate negative health impacts.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact any of the undersigned groups with questions.

Signed,

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