

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Groups Rap DNR For Rushing Dirty Air Rules:

Community Groups Call for Go-Slow Approach

Madison, WI – Community, health and environmental groups are urging the Natural Resources Board to go slow in considering whether to adopt a series of controversial pollution rules promulgated by the Bush Administration in 2002.

“We are simply asking that the Board take the time to carefully review this major change in state policy that the DNR’s own study shows will rollback longstanding clean air protections,” said Caryl Terrell of the Sierra Club. “Last month we applauded the Board when it committed to holding a fair and open process before moving forward with any new air pollution rules. Now, however, the Board is scheduled to adopt the controversial New Source Review rules before any open and fair process has even begun.”

“It is ironic. Wisconsin has long been a leader for clean air and a frequent critic of our neighbors, particularly Illinois, for not doing its fair share to cut air pollution,” said Terrell. “Now it is Wisconsin that is rushing to remove clean air protections while a large number of our sister states, including Illinois, Montana, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont and others have rejected these Bush Administration rollbacks.”

DNR’s analysis shows that in 2002 the New Source Review (NSR) program was responsible for reducing air pollution in Wisconsin by nearly 3,000 tons in a twelve-month period. This is as much particulate matter pollution as emitted by three coal-fired power plants.

“Here in Madison, these NSR rollbacks will eliminate the primary tool DNR has in its clean air toolbox to require four of the five largest sources of air emissions to cut pollution,” said Bruce Nilles, attorney for the Sierra Club. “Without a strong NSR program these aging factories will not be required to upgrade and do their fair share to restore clean air in this county.”

In 2005 there were a total of thirty days when part or all of Wisconsin was under an air quality health advisory. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency air pollution causes asthma attacks, lung cancer, strokes and even premature death.

Among the community groups and individuals sending the letter to the Natural Resources Board are: ACLU of Wisconsin, Madison Alderperson Brenda Konkel, Bayview Foundation, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, Center for Family Policy and Practice, Chrysalis, Clean Air Madison, Clean Wisconsin, Madison Hours, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Outreach, People First Wisconsin, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Prevent Child Abuse WI, Rev. Arthur Lloyd, Sierra Club, UNIDOS Against Domestic Violence, Wheels for Winners and Wisconsin Community Fund.

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