



Our Children's Earth Foundation | 100 First Street, Suite 100-367, San Francisco, CA 94105

NEWS RELEASE

Date: January 6, 2005

Contact:
Jennifer Burcham, OCE 703-622-3593
Christina Kreitzer, Sierra Club 415-977-5619

AIR POLLUTANTS RELEASED BY REFINERIES UNNECESSARILY HURT COMMUNITIES, CHILDREN

Groups Aim to Ensure That EPA Enforces Current Law

San Francisco, CA. — Our Children's Earth Foundation (OCE) and the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit today to ensure that the federal US Environmental Protection Agency begins requiring updated pollution standards for petroleum refineries as required by the federal Clean Air Act.

The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court of Northern California against the EPA, alleges that the EPA has not updated standards since 1974, allowing petroleum refineries to use, in some cases, 20-year old technology. This lapse has allowed existing refineries to operate without installing new technology that would have prevented the emissions of thousands of tons of additional pollutants into the air.

"These standards have been ignored again and again by the government," said Tiffany Schauer, Executive Director of Our Children's Earth. "This just doesn't make any sense. Every day there is a new study linking air pollution to kids who can't breathe. It's amazing that the government still refuses to do its job by requiring dirty refineries to install today's readily available technology."

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA's administrator is required to review and update new source performance standards or NSPS, including standards for petroleum refineries, every eight years. The groups believe that the administrator has failed either to review the standards or to determine that such review is not appropriate in light of readily available information. The pollutants at issue are smog-causing hydrocarbon compounds, nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), particulate matter (PM), and carbon monoxide (CO).

"We all need clean, healthy air to breathe. EPA should protect the public's health by enforcing current laws requiring refineries to install up-to-date pollution controls," said Sierra Club's Pat Gallagher, Director of Environmental Law."

EPA's delay has meant that emission standards have not been updated, despite considerable advances in pollution reduction technology and scientific research linking air pollution to adverse health effects. Numerous studies have found that air pollution causes disease and premature deaths and increases the frequency and severity of asthma attacks. According to the American Lung Association, more than 150 million Americans live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone pollution and or particulate pollution.

###