



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Refineries in the United States should be required to reduce hazardous emissions, groups say

San Francisco, Calif. — Our Children's Earth Foundation (OCE) and the Sierra Club today went to court to protect local communities and prevent a wide range of health problems in the United States. In a new lawsuit, filed against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the groups demanded that the agency follow the Clean Air Act and update air pollution standards for petroleum refineries.

According to EPA's own data, petroleum refineries in this country produce more than 49 million pounds (more than 24,500 tons) of Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) like benzene and toluene each year. This type of air pollution has been associated with health problems ranging from cancer to upper respiratory disorders.

"Air pollution is literally killing thousands of people each year and the federal government is pretending that there is nothing it can do about it," said Tiffany Schauer, executive director of Our Children's Earth. "In reality, the Clean Air Act requires the EPA to keep an eye on these refineries and make sure they are reducing pollution with the best available pollution controls on the market. Instead it is simply ignoring this mandate."

The lawsuit, filed in the Northern District of California, San Francisco, is based on Maximum Achievable Control Technology, or MACT, standards which under the Clean Air Act are required to be updated every eight years to limit the emissions of hazardous air pollutants. Although EPA set standards for petroleum refineries in 1995, it failed to review and update the standards as required under law in 2003. This lapse has allowed existing refineries to operate without installing newer technology that would have protected local communities and reduced hazardous air pollution at refineries across the nation.

"Air pollution puts Americans at risk," said Marti Sinclair, a Sierra Club spokesperson. "Clean air laws are meant to protect our health, but they can't protect us if the administration refuses to obey and enforce them. We deserve strong and updated protections now."

The groups filed a notice letter in October, and moved to sue after the EPA still refused to update the standards as required by law.

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