



GROUP AGAINST SMOG & POLLUTION

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**Testimony of Jamin Bogi
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**To the Allegheny County Health Department
On the Proposed New Air Toxics Guidelines**

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Good afternoon. My name is Jamin Bogi and I work for Group Against Smog and Pollution, or GASP. GASP supports passing the proposed Air Toxics Guidelines. The Guidelines are just over four pages long, and represent the distillation of the hard work of the broad-based committee that's labored on them for several years now. It's perhaps best to read from the proposed Guidelines themselves to make the case for their passage.

From page one we learn: "This document establishes the policy... for evaluating the human health impacts of new or significantly modified sources emitting toxic air emissions[.]...'[A]ir toxics' are...defined as 'air-borne pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects[.]'" So: a policy to evaluate threats to human health. The exact purpose for which this Board exists. Approving these Guidelines will give the Air Program the tools they need to do their jobs correctly.

In fact, the proposed Guidelines mostly represent what the Air Program already does. They set down in writing what's happening in reality. The Air Program's Director recently reviewed the 121 installation permits granted from 2009 through July 2012. Only 13 required air toxics review under the old Guidelines, and all passed. All 13 would also pass under the new Guidelines. Only two permits would need a closer look under this proposal. The Air Program was never bound by the old Guidelines. As knowledge of air toxics changed, the Department changed. They've been carefully analyzing new permits all along. This proposal merely explains to applicants what's expected of them, giving them regulatory certainty, and it offers them flexibility in reaching their goals.

Why do these changes offer flexibility? Again, from page one: "There is no intent...to give this policy the weight or deference of a regulation. This document establishes the framework for the Department to exercise its administrative discretion in the future. The Department reserves the discretion to deviate from this policy statement if circumstances warrant." I repeat, "The Department reserves the discretion to deviate from this policy[.]" So companies get certainty and flexibility.

This flexibility extends beyond Department discretion. Under the new Guidelines, companies are allowed to increase emissions if they reduce others elsewhere in the County. For carcinogenic compounds, companies can even choose which emissions they reduce. That's like telling a homeowner to reduce electric use by 5%. He can switch old light bulbs to more efficient ones, run a fan instead of air

conditioning, or use any other means he deems best to meet that reduction goal. Industry, likewise, can find their best solutions to meet their pollution reduction goals. That's better for the community, and better for the companies.

To summarize: the proposed Guidelines put on paper what's happening in practice, and they offer increased certainty and flexibility to industry.

Last month, Daniel Bricmont, chair of the Air Quality Citizens Advisory Committee, speaking in favor of passage, said "we should take a step forward." Two days ago, Dr. Donald Burke, Dean of the Graduate School of Public Health and chair of the Guidelines Committee, said "I would go ahead now and vote on the new guidelines. They're scientifically sound and were achieved after reaching a consensus." And the committee that wrote the Guidelines unanimously approved the final policy.

Please, let Allegheny County move on, and move forward. Approve these Guidelines. Thank you.