

Subject: newsrel -- Study confirms reduction of air pollution extends life

From: dstanich@arb.ca.gov

Date: Thu, 28 May 2009 11:06:50 -0700

To: post-newsrel@listserv.arb.ca.gov

Air pollution diminishes life expectancy.

Release 09-51
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 28, 2009

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Study confirms reduction of air pollution extends life
Clean air lengthens life spans

SACRAMENTO: Today the California Air Resources Board heard the results of a recently published study in the New England Journal of Medicine that shows reducing air pollution improves life expectancy.

At its monthly hearings the ARB is informed of research results that examine the relationship between air quality and health effects. This month's study, investigating the association between fine particulate matter and life expectancy in 51 U.S. metropolitan areas, found that for every decrease of 10 micrograms per meter cubed of fine particulate matter, life expectancy increased by seven months. Since the late 1970s, improvements in health care, lifestyle and diet have increased the average life expectancy in the United States by nearly three years. Air quality improvements alone accounted for nearly five months of that increase.

"This is a stark reminder of why California is aggressively moving to reduce air pollution," said ARB Chairman Mary D. Nichols. "Life is not only longer with cleaner air, it's healthier."

ARB is particularly concerned as it is estimated that fine particulate matter is associated with as many as 18,000 premature deaths per year in California. Particulate matter is a blend of tiny particles that include elements such as carbon and metals; compounds such as nitrates, organic compounds and sulfates; and, complex mixtures such as diesel exhaust and soil. They can deposit deep in the lungs and contain substances that are particularly harmful to human health.

Along with reduced life expectancy, particulate matter has been linked to increased hospitalizations and emergency room visits for people with chronic heart or lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, and heart and blood vessel disease.

The ARB and the 35 local air districts have adopted many measures that have reduced statewide concentrations of fine particulate matter by nearly 13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ between 1987 and 2006. These reductions are expected to continue as recently adopted regulations curbing emissions from diesel engines come into effect over the coming decade.

The Air Resources Board is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. ARB's mission is to promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through effective reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and

considering effects on the economy. The ARB oversees all air pollution control efforts in California to attain and maintain health based air quality standards.

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