

## Statement on the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards

*September 2, 2011*

Over the last 2½ years, my administration, under the leadership of EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, has taken some of the strongest actions since the enactment of the Clean Air Act four decades ago to protect our environment and the health of our families from air pollution. From reducing mercury and other toxic air pollution from outdated power plants to doubling the fuel efficiency of our cars and trucks, the historic steps we've taken will save tens of thousands of lives each year, remove over a billion tons of pollution from our air, and produce hundreds of billions of dollars in benefits for the American people.

At the same time, I have continued to underscore the importance of reducing regulatory burdens and regulatory uncertainty, particularly as our economy continues to recover. With that in mind, and after careful consideration, I have requested that Administrator

Jackson withdraw the draft ozone national ambient air quality standards at this time. Work is already underway to update a 2006 review of the science that will result in the reconsideration of the ozone standard in 2013. Ultimately, I did not support asking State and local governments to begin implementing a new standard that will soon be reconsidered.

I want to be clear: My commitment, and the commitment of my administration, to protecting public health and the environment is unwavering. I will continue to stand with the hard-working men and women at the EPA as they strive every day to hold polluters accountable and protect our families from harmful pollution. And my administration will continue to vigorously oppose efforts to weaken EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act or dismantle the progress we have made.

## The President's Weekly Address

*September 3, 2011*

At the end of September, if Congress doesn't act, funding for our roads and bridges will expire. This would put a stop to highway construction, bridge repair, mass transit systems, and other important projects that keep our country moving quickly and safely. And it would affect thousands of construction workers and their families who depend on the jobs created by these projects to make ends meet.

Now, usually, renewing this transportation bill is a no-brainer. In fact, Congress has renewed it seven times over the last 2 years. But thanks to political posturing in Washington, they haven't been able to extend it this time, and the clock's running out.

Allowing this bill to expire would be a disaster for our infrastructure and our economy. Right away, over 4,000 workers would be furloughed without pay. If it's delayed for just 10 days, we will lose nearly \$1 billion in highway funding that we can never get back. And if we

wait even longer, almost 1 million workers could be in danger of losing their jobs over the next year.

These are serious consequences, and the pain will be felt all across the country. In Virginia, 19,000 jobs are at risk; in Minnesota, more than 12,000; and in Florida, over 35,000 people could be out of work if Congress doesn't act.

That makes no sense, and it's completely avoidable. There's no reason to put more jobs at risk in an industry that has been one of the hardest hit in this recession. There's no reason to cut off funding for transportation projects at a time when so many of our roads are congested, so many of our bridges are in need of repair, and so many businesses are feeling the cost of delays.

This isn't a Democratic or a Republican issue, it's an American issue. That's why last week, I was joined at the White House by

representatives from the AFL–CIO and the Chamber of Commerce, two groups who don't see eye to eye on much, but who agree that it's critically important for our economy that Congress act now.

That's also why 128 mayors from both parties wrote to Congress asking them to come together and pass a clean extension. These are local leaders who are on the ground every day and who know what would happen to their communities if Congress fails to act.

So I'm calling on Congress, as soon as they come back, to pass a clean extension of the transportation bill to keep workers on the job, keep critical projects moving forward, and to give folks a sense of security.

There's a lot of talk in Washington these days about creating jobs. But it doesn't help when those same folks turn around and risk

losing hundreds of thousands of jobs just because of political gamesmanship. We need to pass this transportation bill and put people to work rebuilding America. We need to put our differences aside and do the right thing for our economy. And now is the time to act.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:30 p.m. on September 1 in the Blue Room at the White House, for broadcast on September 3. In the address, the President referred to Richard L. Trumka, president, AFL–CIO; and David C. Chavern, executive vice president and chief operating officer, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 2, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 3.

## Remarks Following a Tour of Hurricane Damage and an Exchange With Reporters in Paterson, New Jersey

*September 4, 2011*

*The President.* Well, obviously, visiting Wayne, visiting Paterson, many of these surrounding communities, gives you a sense of the devastation that's taken place not only here in New Jersey, but in upstate New York and Vermont and a whole range of States that were affected by Hurricane Irene.

I want to thank Governor Christie, Mayor Jones, the entire congressional delegation that has coordinated in an unprecedented way to try to deal with this crisis. And part of what I think has helped to avert even worse tragedies and greater loss of life is because of the extraordinary responsiveness and farsighted thinking of State, local, and Federal officials. I'm very proud of the work that FEMA has done not only from our central Agency, but more importantly, the folks locally here on the ground who have been coordinating with the emergency management teams here in New Jersey.

I want to thank the Red Cross for their extraordinary responsiveness. We've seen a huge outpouring of volunteers, private sector getting

involved in trying to do what they can to help communities that have been hard hit.

The main message that I have for all the residents not only of New Jersey, but all those communities that have been affected by flooding, by the destruction that occurred as a consequence of Hurricane Irene, is that the entire country is behind you and we are going to make sure that we provide all the resources that are necessary in order to help these communities rebuild.

And I know that there's been some talk about whether there's going to be a slowdown in getting funding out here, emergency relief. As President of the United States, I want to make it very clear that we are going to meet our Federal obligations, because we're one country, and when one part of the country gets affected, whether it's a tornado in Joplin, Missouri, or a hurricane that affects the Eastern Seaboard, then we come together as one country and we make sure that everybody gets the help that they need. And the last thing that the residents here of Paterson or the residents of