My name is June Deen, I am the Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Health Promotions for the American Lung Association in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Thank you for providing an opportunity for me to speak. As many of you know, the Lung Association’s mission is to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. The American Lung Association believes that we need strong carbon standards to protect the lung health of everyone, especially those who suffer from lung disease.

Carbon pollution leads to warmer temperatures that can enhance the conditions for harmful air pollutants, including ozone and particle pollution. Scientists warn that climate change is likely to increase the risk of unhealthy air in large parts of the United States, leading to more unhealthy air days than we would have otherwise. More pollution means more childhood asthma attacks and complications for those with lung disease, including increased risk of premature death. Air pollution also affects people with cardiovascular diseases, diabetics, and low income families. Children growing up where ozone levels are high may risk having lung diseases later in life.

Further west, we already see the effects of devastating drought from the changes in weather patterns and the heat. The drought threatens human health in many ways. Wildfires and dust storms blow fine particles that people inhale deep into their lungs, triggering asthma attacks and heart attacks, and can even shorten their lives. People do their best to prepare for these events and to protect themselves. But we really need to prevent the problems in the first place, by reducing the carbon pollution that is changing the earth’s climate.
We are committed to fighting carbon pollution because it helps us save lives and improve lung health. If we follow the steps outlined in the Clean Power Plan, we can prevent up to 4,100 deaths in 2020—and more each year after that, avoiding up to 6,600 premature deaths in 2030 when all the steps are in place. We can prevent up to 100,000 childhood asthma attacks in 2020, rising to prevent up to 150,000 attacks ten years later.

We need to have a strong Clean Power Plan in place to cut carbon pollution and lessen the burdens on the health of millions of Americans. We urge EPA to adopt standards that will ensure we do as much as we can to fight these threats and protect public health.

Thank you

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