



# Ensuring Utah Families Have Clean Air to Breathe

## Air Pollution in Utah is Harmful to Our Families' Health

Utah's poor air quality constitutes a public health crisis. Seven counties on the west side of the Wasatch Mountains have, for the last decade, failed to meet the short-term national health-based air pollution standards for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), extremely small particles of pollution.

Fine particulate air pollution (coming from smoke stacks, industry operations, tailpipe emissions, and other sources) builds up in the winter, when temperature inversions trap air pollution close to the ground and cause even more pollution to form. These episodes can last as many as 43 days a year and concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> can reach as high as 350% of the standard. These episodes can last weeks, with concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> reaching 350% of the standard, exposing Utahns to dangerous and prolonged levels of air pollution.

The health consequences of Utah's dirty air are significant. Fine particulate air pollution is so small that it gets past the body's defenses to penetrate every cell in the body, causing as many as 2,000 premature deaths in Utah each year. Exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> leads to higher rates of heart attacks and strokes and is linked to loss of intelligence in children. Rates of Alzheimer's and accelerated cognitive decline in the elderly are higher. Virtually every lung disease is caused or exacerbated, and growth of lung function during childhood can be irreversibly stunted. Cancers occur at higher rates, while cancer survival rates are reduced. Women have higher rates of adverse pregnancy outcomes and their newborn babies show increased rates of birth defects and other diseases.

## Utah is Required to Create a Better Plan to Address Air Pollution

We have the tools and the technologies to reduce emissions of air pollution from our industries, businesses, homes, cars, and trucks that will allow our economy to thrive. States with areas that are not attaining Clean Air Act standards must develop plans to use innovations and technologies to reduce emissions, clean their air, and meet the standards. These plans are known as State Implementation Plans, or SIPs.



## UTAH'S AIR POLLUTION IS A CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

The level of air pollution is causing **2,000** premature deaths each year.

Also causing heart attacks, strokes, premature births, childhood cancers, and respiratory infections

FOR OVER A MONTH air quality **exceeds** national health-based standards every year.

We need a **STRONGER PLAN** to clean Utah's air now!

Utah has submitted a moderate plan and is awaiting approval from EPA. Because air pollution along the Wasatch Front failed to improve while Utah prepared the moderate plan, Utah will be required to draft a ‘serious’ SIP, hopefully in 2017. A serious SIP must include more emission reduction measures and stricter controls on industry pollution than the moderate plan.

### Clean Air is Achievable and a Priority - Utah Should Reduce Air Pollution Now

Western Resource Advocates is working to ensure that both of Utah’s SIPs cover all the significant air pollution sources and will result in cleaner air as quickly as possible. We are working with health and other experts to analyze draft plans, to propose more effective measures to the State, and to advocate for strong action. WRA attorneys are submitting legal comments, meeting with state and federal officials, engaging the media, conducting public education, and coordinating with other public interest groups.

### We Need Your Voice so Utah Listens!

All of us have a fundamental right to clean air – but without your help Utah leaders will not take action. Every day matters for the health of our families and communities. Visit [westernresourceadvocates.org](http://westernresourceadvocates.org) to sign up to receive action alerts or donate today to help us clean Utah’s air.

For more information contact:  
Joro Walker  
Utah Office Director  
[joro.walker@westernresources.org](mailto:joro.walker@westernresources.org)  
801.487.9911  
[westernresourceadvocates.org](http://westernresourceadvocates.org)

