CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AIR POLLUTION, ENERGY, AND HEALTH

Resolution 105-02 (Adopted 2-24-02)
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Whereas, There is a growing body of evidence that air pollution can significantly harm human health, and scientists have estimated that the number of deaths in the United States associated with air pollution range from 50,000 to 100,000 per year; [1] and

Whereas, As many as 60,000 people are estimated to die prematurely each year because of exposure to fine particles, with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimating that attainment of a new health standard could save 15,000 lives annually; [2] and

Whereas, Approximately 80% of all carbon monoxide (CO), 82% of nitrogen oxide (NOx) and 10% of sulfur oxide (Sox) emissions come from petroleum combustion in the transportation, energy and petroleum production sectors; [3] and

Whereas, According to the U.S. EPA, power plant particle pollution causes more than 603,000 asthma attacks per year, 366,000 of which could be avoided by cleaning up power plants to modern standards; [4] and

Whereas, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMS), in a recent report concluded that mobile sources were responsible for approximately 90 percent of the cancer risk in the Los Angeles area and that 70 percent of the total cancer risk was attributable to diesel particulates; [5] and

Whereas, Renewable energy production markedly reduces the emission of toxic air pollutants, so that increasing the power produced from renewables would have the effect of displacing air pollution from dirtier power sources, ultimately improving air quality; and

Whereas, Clean, alternative vehicles, such as ZEVs, hybrids and fuel cell vehicles contribute far less to air pollution than even the cleanest of petroleum-fueled vehicles; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That CMA encourage the state of California to develop a mechanism to ensure that the cleanest power generating units, including renewably-fueled units, run first and most often, while encouraging all health care facilities to use the cleanest available technologies for emergency power generation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That CMA encourage the state of California to fully explore and quantify the health costs of air pollution in developing energy policies, aimed at off-setting the cost impacts of retiring old power plants and replacing them with renewable energy sources, and for transforming the transportation infrastructure to ease the introduction of clean, alternative vehicles into the market; and be it further

RESOLVED, That CMA encourage the state of California to explore strategies to fund petroleum demand reduction strategies, to clean-up and mitigate transportation and petroleum related air and water pollution, and to support new, clean transportation technologies and infrastructure planning.

REFERENCES

1. Dockery DW and Pope CA. Acute Respiratory Effects of Particulate Air Pollution. Annual Review Public Health, 1994: Vol. 15,107-32.

2. Wilson R and Spengler J, Eds. Particles in Our Air: Concentrations and Health Effects. 1999, p. 212; US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Staff Papers on Smog and Soot Pollution; Review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone and Particulate Matter. 1996

3. California Air Resources Board. The 2001 California Almanac of Emissions and Air Quality. April 2001; California Air Resources Board. Emissions by Category: 2000 Estimated Annual Average Emissions Statewide. October 2000.

4. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, 1996 Staff Papers on Smog and Soot Pollution: "Review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone and Particulate Matter."(1996).

5. Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study in the South Coast Air Basin. South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMS), 1999.