

Talking Points on SB 350 (DeLeon)
Assembly Natural Resources Committee

July 13 2015

I'm Dr. Linda Rudolph, Director of the Center for Climate Change and Health at the Public Health Institute. I join over two dozen health and medical organizations that strongly support SB 350 because it is a critically needed health measure.

Climate change is the greatest public health threat of this century. It demands action now to protect the health of all Californians. Global health experts - including the U.S. Surgeon General - are united in voicing the urgent need to cut climate pollution to protect our families and communities from catastrophic climate impacts. There is no time to delay.

Oil companies and other opponents of SB350 are saying this measure is too costly and will harm our economy. As a physician, I'm also worried about costs and harms. I'm worried about the harm that air pollution, carbon pollution, and climate change are doing to the health of our communities - especially in disadvantaged communities that already suffer a high burden of lung and heart disease, and to the elderly and children.

Recent surveys of physician members of the American Thoracic Society and the National Medical Association found that a large majority are already seeing the impacts of climate change on

the health of their patients, due to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, more severe allergy seasons, higher asthma-inducing ozone levels, and extreme weather.

California is home to the top six worst polluted cities in the country. 80% of our residents are affected by unhealthy air that causes more than 7,000 premature deaths and tens of thousands of asthma attacks in California each year. Climate change will only make this worse.

And let's not forget the health care costs associated with the many ER visits and hospitalizations each year caused by pollution from the use of oil and other fossil fuels. These are real costs, and they will grow if we do not act now to implement climate solutions.

But we can take action to promote and protect our health. California led the nation in kicking the smoking habit, saving a million lives and averting a billion dollars in health care costs in the process.

Now it's time for California to lead the nation in kicking our petroleum addiction. With clean energy policies like those in SB350, we can avoid thousands of asthma attacks and many hundreds of heart attacks and premature deaths over the next decade, as well as at least \$8 billion in related health costs.

We simply cannot afford the human harm and suffering, the productivity losses, and the health care costs that result from

continued reliance on petroleum and its associated carbon pollution and climate disruption.

That's why I and so many other physicians and health organizations strongly support SB 350. The health of our children depends on it.