

Stop Polluters: Sample OpEd

Health Campaign Sample OpEd

Polluters Make Us Sick

We are entering the eleventh year of the 21st century, and yet our country is still heavily reliant on 19th century energy sources.

We are addicted to oil and coal, and problems continue to arise from that dependence. Big Oil and Big Coal are literally making us sick. The pollution from burning oil and coal doesn't just ruin your view – it also poses serious health risks, especially to children and senior citizens, and it cuts short thousands of lives every year.

Burning fossil fuels creates a host of serious, life-threatening health problems, including asthma, reduced lung function, and heart disease – and that's just from airborne pollution. This pollution increases emergency room visits and hospital admissions for respiratory problems, and leads to irreversible lung damage. In [state/county] alone [X] kids with asthma are breathing unhealthy air thanks to big polluters like [local examples]

Big Oil and Big Coal are also fouling our water with cancer-causing toxins, be it through coal ash ponds or massive oil spills such as BP's Gulf disaster. When coal is burned at power plants, it releases mercury into our atmosphere. This mercury falls to earth in rain, running into our lakes, rivers and streams. Mercury accumulates in fish and the people who eat them, causing brain damage, mental retardation and other developmental problems in children and infants. The problem is so widespread that one in six women of childbearing age has enough dangerous mercury levels in her blood to put her baby at risk.

As if that weren't enough, Oil and Coal are also destroying our nation's economic health. By tying us to dirty 19th century energy sources, these corporate polluters are strangling our economy while wreaking havoc on our health.

Corporate polluters can't be trusted to police themselves. To them, our health is worth less than their profits. They want to continue polluting with no limits.

Fortunately, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) exists to enforce much needed safeguards to keep polluters from making us sick.

In the 40 years since Americans demanded its creation, the EPA has saved millions of lives by enforcing clean air and water standards. More than 1.7 million asthma attacks and \$110 billion in healthcare costs were avoided in 2010 alone, thanks to the agency's efforts.

There is a cure for all these Big Oil and Big Coal ailments. With the help of the EPA, we can clean up our air and water and protect our families now by phasing out life-threatening oil and coal, and moving to a clean energy economy for a clean and prosperous future.

We need our leaders, particularly President Obama, to hear that the nation's physical and economic well-being depends on enforcing strong standards to protect people's health.

Administrator 1/7/11 3:46 PM

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