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Embargoed Until Thursday, May 1, 2008, 12:01 AM (EDT)

**AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION ISSUES STATE OF THE AIR REPORT:
FIRST CITY OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA (PITTSBURGH) TOPS ONE OF
THE MOST-POLLUTED LISTS**

National Trends Show that Declines in Ozone and Particle Pollution Have Stalled

Editor's Notes: *American Lung Association subject matter experts available for interviews— Bernadette Toomey, President and CEO; Dr. Norman H. Edelman, M.D., Chief Medical Officer; and Janice Nolen, Assistant Vice President, National Policy and Advocacy. Online maps pin-pointing cleanest and most-polluted cities available at www.lungusa.org.*

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 1, 2008—The American Lung Association issued its annual report card on air pollution today, ranking cities most affected by three types of pollution: short-term particle pollution, year-round particle pollution and ozone pollution. For the first time ever, a city outside California, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, tops one of the most polluted lists in the ninth consecutive *American Lung Association State of the Air* report.

Pittsburgh moved to the top of the list of cities most polluted by short-term levels of particle pollution, a deadly cocktail of ash, soot, diesel exhaust, chemicals, metals and aerosols that can spike dangerously for hours to weeks on end. The body's natural defenses, coughing and sneezing, fail to keep these microscopic particles from burrowing deep within the lungs, triggering serious problems such as breathing, asthma and heart attacks, strokes, lung cancer and even early death. Pittsburgh also ranks second on the list of cities with the most year-round particle pollution while Los Angeles again claims the first spot this year.

Los Angeles, despite being ranked atop two of the three most-polluted lists, saw continued improvements in air quality, dropping its year-round particle pollution levels by nearly one-third during the last decade, and saw solid improvement in levels of ozone or "smog," a gas formed most often when sunlight reacts with vapors emitted when motor vehicles, factories, power plants and other sources burn fuel. Ozone irritates the respiratory tract and causes health problems like asthma attacks, coughing, wheezing, chest pain and even premature death.

"The air quality in several cities has improved, but in others, declines in pollution have stalled. The trends tell us loud and clear that we need to do more to protect Americans from breathing air that's simply hazardous to their health," said Bernadette Toomey, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Lung Association. "We applaud the aggressive efforts of Los Angeles to control particle pollution. It's proof that making a commitment to clean up pays off."

Several cities across the country lost footing and slipped closer to the top of the list of most ozone-polluted cities, including San Diego, Atlanta, Charlotte and the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. metro area. Birmingham, Alabama, joined the list for the very first time, ranking at number 22 of most ozone-polluted cities, while the five worst cities on this list actually saw modest improvements. Fresno, California, for example, experienced a remarkable decline in the number of high ozone days since its peak in 2001-2003.

Due to the lead time for the *State of the Air* report, the American Lung Association used the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 1997 standard for ozone levels rather than the new tighter standard announced on March 12, 2008.

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“If we were to measure the number of unhealthy days against the new ozone standard, it would show that ozone pollution is worse than the report indicates,” said Ms. Toomey. “Even with these stricter ozone standards, Americans are being denied the health protection they deserve under the Clean Air Act.”

National trends: declines in ozone and particle pollution have stalled.

New this year, the *State of the Air* report provides online charts showing the trends in ozone and year-round particle pollution in each of the 25 most polluted cities. The ozone charts cover data from 1996 to 2006, while the year-round particle pollution charts show trends from 2000-2006. In addition, the report incorporates the EPA analyses of ozone trend data from 1990 to 2006 and particle pollution trend data for 2000-2006. The *State of the Air* trend charts and the EPA analyses confirm that air pollution levels dropped in the early years of this century, but have leveled off in the last three years, particularly when controlled for weather.

Other Key Findings of State of the Air 2008:

- One in 10 people in the U.S. live in areas with unhealthy levels of all three types of pollution: ozone, short-term and year-round particle pollution.
- Two of five people in the U.S live in counties that have unhealthy levels of either ozone or particle pollution.
- Nearly one-third of the U.S. population lives in areas with unhealthy levels of ozone.
- Over one quarter of the people in the U.S. live in an area with unhealthy short-term levels of particle pollution.
- One in six people in the U.S. live in an area with unhealthy year-round levels of particle pollution.

The cities identified in the lists below most often include the respective metropolitan areas.

Top Ten U.S. Cities Most Polluted by Short-Term Particle Pollution: 1) Pittsburgh, Pa.; 2) Los Angeles/Long Beach/Riverside, Calif.; 3) Fresno/Madera, Calif.; 4) Bakersfield, Calif.; 5) Birmingham, Ala.; 6) Logan, Utah 7) Salt Lake City, Utah ; 8) Sacramento, Calif.; 9) Detroit, Mich.; 10) Baltimore, Md./Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia.

Top Ten U.S. Cities Most Polluted by Year-Round Particle Pollution: 1) Los Angeles/Long Beach/Riverside, Calif.; 2) Pittsburgh, Pa.; 3) Bakersfield, Calif.; 4) Birmingham, Ala.; 5) Visalia/Porterville, Calif.; 6) Atlanta, Ga.; 7) Cincinnati, Ohio; 8) Fresno/Madera, Calif. 9) Hanford/Corcoran, Calif.; 10) Detroit, Mich.

Top Ten U.S. Cities Most Polluted by Ozone: 1) Los Angeles/Long Beach/Riverside, Calif.; 2) Bakersfield, Calif.; 3) Visalia/Porterville, Calif.; 4) Houston, Texas; 5) Fresno/Madera, Calif. 6) Sacramento, Calif. 7) Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas; 8) New York, N.Y./Newark, N.J.; 9) Baltimore, Md./Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia; 10) Baton Rouge, La.

To see what grade (A to F) your community's air quality earned, visit the American Lung Association website at www.lungusa.org. Tips are also available on how to protect yourself and your family from air pollution.

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For more information or to schedule an interview with a subject matter expert, please call Carrie Martin, (202) 785-3355 x3461, cmartin@lungusadc.org.

About the American Lung Association: Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. The American Lung Association funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is "*Improving life, one breath at a time.*" For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or log on to www.lungusa.org.

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