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# Groups Legally Challenge EPA's Latest Attack on Clean Air Protections

EPA's recent action leaves communities vulnerable to dangerous, toxic pollutants

## CONTACTS

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### **WASHINGTON, D.C. —**

On behalf of community groups and organizations in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, Earthjustice challenged the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent action to delay air pollution compliance rules for steel mills. The move calls for EPA to address air pollution standards from these facilities.

Earlier in July, [EPA issued an interim final rule delaying air pollution protections](#) for vulnerable communities living near steel mills, further depriving people of important health protections. Among the nation's worst polluters, steel mills dump hundreds of tons of largely uncontrolled hazardous air pollution onto neighboring communities each year.

Although EPA's existing rules have required steel mills to reduce their emissions since last April, EPA's new action delays compliance until April 2027, a two-year extension during which the mills' toxic pollution will continue at current levels. EPA published it without notice, depriving the public of any opportunity to object to the extension before it took effect. This means nearby communities will continue to suffer from exposure to tons of hazardous air pollutants from these plants, including lead and arsenic, known to cause debilitating health issues.

"Communities living near steel mills in states such as Indiana and Pennsylvania deserve better," said **Earthjustice Senior Attorney Adrienne Lee**. "Each year, steel mills expose these communities to hundreds of tons of toxic air pollution which places them at increased risk of developing cancer and a variety of chronic health conditions. That EPA would delay these protections and pursue this step without first providing an opportunity for public input is especially alarming and is inconsistent with EPA's responsibility to protect human health and the environment."

The eight currently operational steel mills in the U.S. release more than 300 tons of toxic metals into the air of neighboring communities each year. [Studies](#) show pollution exposure to these types of emissions [increases the risk of cardiovascular mortality](#) and

lung disease. Further, exposure to these emissions can cause developmental issues for children and harm to the immune system.

## Quotes from our clients and partners:

“We are witnessing the wholesale dismantling of the EPA and environmental protections that will devastate air quality in Northwest Indiana. The 2024 air standards — hard-won safeguards for fenceline communities — are being stripped away, as the agency grants emissions exemptions to steel mills and eliminates public input. In the region, carcinogenic plumes spew from steel-making facilities on our lakefront, where families gather and children play during these sweltering summer days. This is environmental injustice: they are sacrificing our communities, gutting our social safety nets, and taking away our future. We will not stay silent,” said **Lisa Vallee, organizing director of Just Transition Northwest Indiana, and Whiting community leader.**

“Common sense and affordable actions taken by steel mills can substantially reduce metal emissions and protect the people living in the communities hosting these facilities. Instead, this administration is delaying the sorely needed emissions reductions and planning on putting out a rule we anticipate will gut protections, all while avoiding public comment and scrutiny. Shame on them!” said **Jane Williams, chair of the Sierra Club National Clean Air Team.**

“The EPA Interim Final Rule fails to protect Gary residents and the surrounding northwest Indiana communities from decades-long and ongoing exposure to uncontrolled health-harming hazardous air pollutants from U.S. Steel Gary Works and area steel mills. These pollutants are the proven cause of significant increases in Gary resident respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, cancers at numerous sites, and premature deaths. The current outmoded and insufficient methods of hazardous air emission monitoring and control at Gary Works are not protective of human health and the environment. Residents must have a voice in EPA decisions and rulemaking and EPA must do its job to protect the residents and the natural resources of Gary by requiring compliance with the 2024 Iron and Steel rule, not by rolling back long overdue protections,” said **Dorreen Carey, president of Gary Advocates for Responsible Development.**

“Reducing dangerous emissions of hazardous air pollutants is a life and death issue. We will not stand by as the Trump administration puts lives at risk and allows polluters to circumvent rules to save the steel industry a little cash,” said **Alex Bomstein, executive director of the Clean Air Council.**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [About the Toxic Exposure & Health Program](#)

## ABOUT EARTHJUSTICE

Earthjustice is the premier nonprofit environmental law organization. We wield the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change. We are here because the earth needs a good lawyer.