

January 18, 2018

Mr. Gary Willey
Air Pollution Control Officer
San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
3433 Roberto Court
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: Oceano Dunes: Lung Health Impacts of Particle Pollution

Dear Mr. Willey:

On behalf of the American Lung Association in California, I am writing to offer our support for reducing harmful particle pollution levels from the Oceano Dunes as quickly as possible to protect public health. It is well-documented that this local source of pollution contributes to air quality conditions that threaten the health of local residents. We encourage strong coordination between your agency, County leaders and California Department of Parks and Recreation and other agency partners to enforce solutions to this ongoing source of harmful air pollution, including at least 100 acres of dust control mitigation.

Californians face some of the most difficult air pollution challenges in the United States, with many of our cities represented on the list of the most polluted in the United States. The American Lung Association's 2017 *State of the Air* report on air quality found that San Luis Obispo ranks among the top ten most particle-polluted metropolitan areas in the United States due to particle pollution. San Luis Obispo has few of the characteristics of the other communities appearing on the most-polluted list: most are more densely populated with mobile sources of pollution; are situated more inland from beneficial coastal influences; and have geographic characteristics that trap pollution close to ground level. Within the context of our national rankings, the poor air quality created by inadequate controls on the dunes clearly illustrates the national significance that a local pollution source can have on lung health.

Our staff have discussed this issue with local residents affected by unhealthy air conditions and so we wish to reinforce the health issues caused by elevated levels of particle pollution. Particle pollution can affect the health of all local residents, but especially the tens of thousands of children and adults living with asthma, COPD, heart disease and many other cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses.

Short term exposures to elevated particle levels have been linked to:

- death from respiratory and cardiovascular causes, including strokes;
- increased mortality in infants and young children;

- increased numbers of heart attacks, especially among the elderly and in people with heart conditions;
- inflammation of lung tissue in young, healthy adults;
- increased hospitalization for cardiovascular disease, including strokes and congestive heart failure;
- increased emergency room visits for patients suffering from acute respiratory ailments;
- increased hospitalization for asthma among children;
- increased severity of asthma attacks in children

Year-round exposure to particle pollution has been linked to:

- slowed lung function growth in children and teenagers;
- development of asthma in children up to age 14;
- significant damage to the small airways of the lungs;
- increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease; and
- increased risk of lower birth weight and infant mortality.

(all research citations are available at www.stateoftheair.org).

Because mitigation of particle pollution can have significant benefits to local air quality and lung health, the American Lung Association in California urges the San Luis Obispo Air Quality Management District to continue to work with State Parks and other state and local agencies to resolve the Oceano Dunes particle pollution issue as quickly as possible.

We encourage your agency to move forward in 2018 with implementation of meaningful new mitigation efforts of at least 100 acres as a first step in providing relief to the residents affected by vehicle activity at the dunes.

We look forward to working with you in your new role and appreciate your commitment to this important public health matter.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Holmes-Gen
Senior Director, Air Quality and Climate Change

