

Specifically, this resolution strongly urges the EPA to maintain the .12 parts per million standard for ozone and conduct all necessary research to reach conclusive findings on questions concerning particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns in diameter and larger. In addition, this resolution asks the EPA to identify any unfunded mandates or other administrative and economic burdens for State and local governments or agencies that would result from the proposed changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Unfortunately, this bipartisan request has been ignored. The EPA has gone forward with new regulations. After making only minor modifications to the EPA proposal, the administration announced the final standard 2 weeks ago. I am disappointed, because I was hopeful the President would recommend a policy that recognized the importance of clean air, and the importance of jobs and economic growth. However, since he did not, I will continue to work hard to highlight the importance of these very real, very serious issues.

This resolution makes clear that the people of Michigan understand what is at stake in this debate. I wish the same could be said of the administration.

The resolution follows:

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 11

Whereas, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a responsibility to review periodically the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone and particulate matter (PM); and

Whereas, The EPA is considering establishing a more stringent ozone standard and a new, more stringent standard for particulate matter at or below 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}); and

Whereas, Michigan, through its local jurisdictions, businesses, and citizens, has supported health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) that are premised on sound science; and

Whereas, Michigan has made significant progress in meeting current NAAQS for both ozone and particulate matter (PM) under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, although there are some areas that have not yet come into compliance with the current standard(s); and

Whereas, Michigan, through its local jurisdictions, businesses, consumers, and taxpayers, has become considerable cost to come into compliance with the current NAAQS for ozone and particulate matter; and

Whereas, The proposed new standards will significantly expand the number of non-attainment areas for both ozone particulate matter. This may result in additional emission controls in all areas, thus imposing significant economic administrative, and regulatory burdens on Michigan, its citizens, businesses, and local governments; and

Whereas, EPA's own Clean Air Science Advisory Committee (CASAC) was unable to find any "brightline" that would distinguish any public health benefit among any of the proposed new standards for ozone, including the current standard; and

Whereas, There is very little existing PM_{2.5} monitoring data; and

Whereas, There are many unanswered questions and scientific uncertainties regarding the health effects of particulate matter, in particular PM_{2.5}, including:

Divergent opinions among scientists who have investigated the issue;

Exposure misclassification;
Measurement errors;
Lack of supporting toxicological data;
Lack of a plausible toxicological mechanism;

Lack of correlation between recorded PM levels and public health effects;
Influence of other variables; and
The existence of possible alternative explanations; and

Whereas, No scientific proof exists that establishing a more stringent ozone standard or a new, more stringent PM_{2.5} standard would avoid alleged adverse health, but it would assuredly impose significantly higher costs; and

Whereas, The issue of transported volatile organic compounds is not adequately addressed; now therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That we advise and strongly urge the EPA to reaffirm the existing NAAQS for ozone; and be it further

Resolved, That we advise and strongly urge the EPA to reaffirm the existing NAAQS for PM₁₀; and be it further

Resolved, That we advise and strongly urge the EPA to refrain from establishing a new NAAQS for PM_{2.5} at this time and to gather the necessary PM_{2.5} monitoring data and conduct all necessary research needed to address the issue of causality and other critical and important unanswered scientific questions concerning PM_{2.5}; and be it further

Resolved, That we advise and strongly urge the EPA to identify any unfunded mandates or other administrative and economic burdens for state or local governments or agencies that would result from the proposed changes to the NAAQS for ozone and particulate matter, and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, the administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and other appropriate administration officials.

Adopted by the House of Representatives, March 11, 1997.

Adopted by the Senate, March 12, 1997.●

VFW INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE LONG-DISTANCE PHONE SERVICE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for their program called Operation Uplink. Through private donations, the VFW has been able to distribute more than 11,000 hours worth of free long-distance calling time to hospitalized veterans and active duty troops overseas who might not otherwise be able to talk with their loved ones back home. Since I represent a State which especially honors national service and has the most combat veterans per capita, you can be sure that this is an issue I care about deeply.

Shortly after I joined the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I learned that none of our country's veterans' hospitals had bedside phones. Patients had to collect change to use at a pay phone, or wait for a nurse to wheel a portable phone into their room. Not only did this inconvenience patients greatly, it added to the burdens of an already overworked nursing staff.

We all realize that a phone is more than a modern convenience; it is a lifeline to the outside world for a sick veteran. That is why I fought for, and won, \$1.5 million in 1993 to support the work of the bedside phone project, P.T. Phone Home, in West Virginia and elsewhere.

A couple of years ago when I was in West Virginia visiting the Clarksburg VA Medical Center, I spoke with a World War II combat veteran, Kenneth Getz. Mr. Getz had been experiencing serious medical problems, but he was much more concerned about his blind wife than his own health. He told me, "We start the day with a phone call and end it with a phone call. Phones should have been in here years ago." And he is exactly right—we have an obligation to make certain that every veteran receives the same quality care you or I would want for ourselves.

Unfortunately, too many poor veterans are not able to take advantage of the bedside phone service, since for many, home is not a local call from the hospital. The thought of a sick or wounded veteran, lying in a distant veterans' hospital, cut off from family, children and friends, is very troubling to me. It is plain wrong.

I highly commend the VFW for recognizing this problem and taking action. We know that in the long run, veterans who can talk to their spouse or children are not only happier, but also have higher morale, and that can go far in improving their health. I can just envision the comforting effect on a patient like Mr. Getz in having the opportunity to talk to his son in Houston or wife in Charleston—all of this made possible by the VFW initiative.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending a warm thank-you to the VFW and its members all across America. I am especially pleased to note that this service is being provided by private donations, thus protecting the already beleaguered Federal budget. This project is a tribute to the many veterans who believed in the principles of freedom and democracy strongly enough to risk their lives in the name of freedom. By providing prepaid phone cards to sick vets and overseas troops, the VFW truly "Honors the dead by helping the living."●

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOUSIF GHAFARI

MR. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to offer my warm congratulations to Mr. Yousif B. Ghafari who is celebrating the 15th anniversary of Ghafari Associates.

The economic success in Michigan is due in no small part to the invigoration of small businesses like Ghafari Associates. Over the past 15 years Ghafari Associates has risen to be the third largest architectural and engineering firm in the State. This incredible achievement is largely due to