



The Cross-State Air Pollution Rule *Health and Economic Benefits for Virginia*

To protect states afflicted by air pollution from outside their borders, EPA finalized the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule to reduce harmful emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) from power plants in the eastern half of the U.S. These clean air protections are called for under the —Good Neighbor! provision of the Clean Air Act – a provision ensuring that air pollution discharged by power plants in an upwind state do not contribute to unhealthy pollution levels in downwind states. These protections will help downwind states suffering from this harmful pollution restore healthy air for their citizens and maintain compliance with the health-based national ambient air quality standards.

Under this rule, harmful pollution will be significantly reduced: SO₂ emissions from power plants in the eastern half of the U.S. would be reduced 73% and NO_x emissions would be reduced 54%. Nationally, this rule will save up to 34,000 lives, prevent 400,000 asthma attacks, and avoid 1.8 million lost work or sick days each year once in place. The economic value of these benefits is estimated at \$120–280 billion each year. These benefits don't even account for the value of increased agricultural crop and commercial forest yields, improvements to visibility, and reduced nitrogen and acid deposition.

Virginians will reap vital health benefits from this rule.

Outside pollution from 17¹ states is currently impairing Virginia's air quality. Reducing pollution from both out of state and in-state sources will save up to 1,603 lives² and will prevent 810 heart attacks, 490 hospitalizations, and 443 ER visits in Virginia every year. Air quality improvement from this rule could benefit the over 1.8 million children at risk for asthma in Virginia.³ These reductions will also prevent 85,160 lost work days due to these illnesses and provide about \$13 billion⁴ in benefits to Virginians each year. These benefits are just those related to avoided mortality, but there are other important health and environmental benefits not quantified here. Under these clean air protections, the quantified health benefits for Virginia are more than two times what the state spent on health, hospitals, and police protection combined in 2009⁵— in other words, these billions of dollars in health benefits are very good news for Virginians.



¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). “Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act.”

<http://www.epa.gov/cleanairactbenefits/whereyoulive/>

² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). —Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Federal Implementation Plans to Reduce Interstate Transport of Fine Particulate Matter and Ozone in 27 States; Correction of SIP Approvals for 22 States, June 2011 and Supplemental Information. <http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/pdfs/FinalRIA.pdf>

³ American Lung Association. Pediatric asthma estimates are for those under 18 years of age and represent the estimated number of children who had asthma during 2009 based on age-specific national rates (NHIS) applied to age-specific county population estimates (US Census). <http://www.lungusa.org/finding-cures/our-research/trend-reports/estimated-prevalence.pdf>

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Estimate in 2007 dollars. See excel spreadsheet at: <http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/benefitsmap.html>

⁵ The U.S. Census reports that Virginia spent approximately \$4.8 billion on health, hospitals, and police protection combined in 2009: <http://www.census.gov/govs/state/>.