

EMBARGOED UNTIL:
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**American Lung Association “State of the Air 2015” Shows
Kentucky Air Quality Mixed**

Strong Improvements for Many Cities, Others Suffer Worst Quality Episodes

Editor’s Note: Trend charts and rankings for metropolitan areas and county grades are available at www.stateoftheair.org.

Louisville, KY [Embargoed Until: 12:01 a.m. (EST), April 29, 2015]— The American Lung Association’s State of the Air report released today shows that the Louisville Metro Area has seen a slight decrease in year-round particle pollution (soot) levels compared to the 2014 report. This is in keeping with a trend seen across the nation of lower particle pollution levels. Louisville has also experienced fewer unhealthy days of high ozone (smog). Louisville ranked as the 28th most polluted city in the country for ozone, an improved ranking than last year’s report. It also ranked 50th most polluted for short-term unhealthy particle days and 15th most polluted for year-round particle levels, both improved rankings than last year’s report. However, Louisville has actually seen fewer days when short-term particle pollution has reached unhealthy levels.

The Lexington Fayette County/metro area has seen an improvement in year-round particle pollution (soot) levels and short-term particle pollution levels compared to the 2014 report. This is in keeping with a trend seen across the nation of lower particle pollution levels. In addition, Lexington has also experienced many more unhealthy days of high ozone (smog). Lexington received an A grade in high particle pollution days from 2011-2012.

Overall, “State of the Air 2015” found that nearly half of all Americans – more than 147 million – live in counties in the U.S. where ozone or particle pollutions levels make the air unhealthy to breathe. The 15th annual national report card shows that, while the nation continued to reduce particle pollution -- a pollutant recently determined to cause lung cancer -- poor air quality remains a significant public health concern. Additionally, a changing climate is making it harder to protect human health. Especially alarming is that ozone levels (smog), a powerful respiratory irritant and the most widespread air pollutant, were much worse than in the previous year’s report.

“The air in Louisville and Lexington is certainly cleaner than when we started the ‘State of the Air’ report 16 years ago,” said Heather Wehrheim, Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association in Kentucky. “The continued reduction of year-round particle pollution is thanks to cleaner diesel fleets and cleaner power plants. However, the increases in unhealthy days of high ozone tell us we still have work to do. Reducing ozone pollution will be particularly challenging because warmer temperatures increase risk for ozone pollution, and climate change sets the stage for higher ozone levels in the future.

We must set stronger health standards for pollutants and clean up sources of pollution in Kentucky to protect the health of our citizens.”

Many counties in Kentucky saw their grades change in this year’s report. Below are the counties with grades and any changes in the grades.*

	Ozone	Change	Particle	Change
	Grade		Pollution	
			Grade***	
Bell	B.....	No Change	B	Worsened from an A
Boone.....	C.....	No Change	DNC.....	No Change
Boyd.....	C.....	No Change	A.....	No Change
Bullitt.....	D	No Change	INC.....	No Change
Campbell	F	No Change	A.....	No Change
Carter	B.....	No Change	A	No Change
Christian	C.....	No Change	A.....	No Change
Daviess	F.....	No Change	A	No Change
Edmonson	D	Improved from an F.....	DNC.....	No Change
Fayette	D	No Change	A	Improved from a B
Franklin	DNC.....	No Change	INC.....	No Change
Greenup	D	No Change	DNC.....	No Change
Hancock.....	F	No Change	DNC	No Change
Hardin.....	C.....	No Change	A	No Change
Henderson.....	F.....	No Change	A	No Change
Jefferson.....	F.....	No Change	B.....	Improved from a C
Jessamine	C.....	No Change	DNC	No Change
Livingston	F.....	No Change	DNC	No Change
Madison	DNC.....	No Change	A	No Change
McCracken	F.....	No Change	A	No Change
Morgan.....	B.....	Changed from INC.....	DNC	No Change
Oldham.....	F.....	No Change	DNC	No Change
Perry.....	B.....	No Change	INC	
Pike	B.....	No Change	C	Worsened from a B
Pulaski	C.....	No Change	C	No Change
Simpson.....	C.....	No Change.....	DNC.....	No Change
Trigg	C.....	Improved from a D.....	DNC.....	No Change
Warren.....	D.....	No Change.....	DNC.....	No Change
Washington.....	C.....	Changed from INC.....	DNC.....	No Change

**Unable to collect because of lack of monitor or insufficient years of collection.

***Short term particle pollution grades. Annual particle pollution grades can be found with the entire report at www.stateoftheair.org.

“State of the Air 2014” finds that in most counties in Kentucky ozone levels had little change, resulting in the same grades where the levels are monitored. Ozone (smog) is the most widespread air pollutant, created by the reaction of sunlight on emissions from vehicles and other sources. When ozone is inhaled, it irritates the lungs, like a bad sunburn. It can cause immediate health problems and continue days later. Ozone can cause wheezing, coughing, asthma attacks and premature death.

“From our first “State of the Air” report to this most recent one, we have seen that the Clean Air Act delivers significant health benefits,” said Wehrheim. “However, the past 16 years have also confirmed that air pollution is a more serious threat to our health than we’d previously known.”

“Congress needs to continue to ensure that the provisions under the Clean Air Act are protected and are enforced. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and every state must have adequate funding to monitor and protect our citizens from air pollution and new threats caused by increased temperatures.”

The American Lung Association calls for several steps to improve the air everyone breathes:

- **Clean up power plants.** The EPA needs to reduce carbon pollution. Ozone and particle pollution that blows across state lines must be controlled. In the next year, the Administration has pledged to set standards for carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.
- **Strengthen the outdated ozone standards.** The EPA needs to set a strong, health-based standard to limit ozone pollution. Strong standards will drive the needed cleanup of ozone across the nation.
- **Clean up new wood-burning devices.** The EPA needs to issue strong standards to clean up new wood stoves, outdoor wood boilers and other residential wood-burning devices.
- **Fund the work to provide healthy air.** Congress needs to adequately fund the work of the EPA and the states to monitor and protect the nation from air pollution.
- **Protect the Clean Air Act.** Congress needs to ensure that the protections under the Clean Air Act remain strong and enforced.

The American Lung Association in Michigan urges the public to join the fight for clean air and to learn how to protect themselves and their families by visiting www.stateoftheair.org.

Background

The “State of the Air 2014” report uses the most recent quality-assured air pollution data, collected by federal, state and local governments and tribes in 2010, 2011, and 2012. These data come from official monitors for the two most widespread types of pollution, ozone and particle pollution. The report grades counties, ranking cities and counties based on scores calculated by average number of unhealthy days (for ozone and for short-term particle pollution) and by annual averages (for year-round particle pollution).

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About the American Lung Association in Kentucky

As the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States, the American Lung Association’s mission is to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. As a charter member of the nationwide organization, the American Lung Association in Michigan is committed to carrying out this mission in Michigan. In communities throughout the state, the American Lung Association is working to improve life one breath at a time through education, advocacy and research. The American Lung Association in Michigan is funded by public donations, along with gifts and grants from corporations, foundations, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. From tuberculosis to asthma, from tobacco control to clean indoor and outdoor air, the lung health successes achieved during the American Lung Association’s century of service have been gained only through the work of thousands of committed volunteers, dedicated staff and generous supporters. 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.alam.org.