



## EESI Commends EPA for Toxics Progress, Urges More Focus on Mobile Sources

**Tuesday, September 2**—[The Environmental and Energy Study Institute](#) (EESI) applauds the recent *Urban Air Toxics* report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which documents a decrease in air toxics that are “known or suspected of causing cancer and can damage the immune, respiratory, neurological, reproductive, and developmental systems.” Thanks to EPA actions, toxic air pollutants have been reduced by millions of tons in the last 20 years. Yet, the report does not give sufficient consideration to toxic air emissions from gasoline, which may be getting worse. EESI urges, therefore, that emissions from gasoline vehicles be recognized as a potentially worsening public health threat by the EPA.

Higher octane gasoline can cause an increase in the emissions of ultrafine particulates. These particulates act as vectors for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), carrying them into soft body tissues and bloodstreams which larger particulates can't reach. A growing body of evidence has linked ingested PAHs to severe health problems, such as cancer and heart and lung disease. PAHs are emitted by gasoline-powered cars: they result from the incomplete combustion of gasoline aromatics (benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, xylene), which represent more than 20 percent of the volume of gasoline. Because these aromatics boost the octane value of gasoline, oil companies are reluctant to dispense with them.

In its *Urban Air Toxics* report to Congress, which is required under the Clean Air Act, EPA finds that the nation has greatly reduced the prevalence of larger particulates, such as toxic benzene, mercury, lead, and other hazardous air pollutants from both stationary and mobile sources over the past two decades. However, EPA is underestimating the impact of gasoline emissions. Indeed, an extensive scientific literature review conducted by the non-profit [Urban Air Initiative](#) has found that, contrary to EPA's assertion, gasoline emissions – not diesel emissions – dominate air toxics in urban areas.

“We are encouraged by EPA's recognition of the importance of focusing on toxics and reducing the exposure levels of overburdened communities,” said Carol Werner, EESI's Executive Director. “However, the evolving science on air toxics has suggested that the toxics derived from gasoline aromatics have been consistently under-predicted, and therefore need to receive additional scrutiny from EPA scientists. EPA has acknowledged they continue to improve their understanding of toxics, and we hope we and others in this field can work with them to that end.”

An April 2014 workshop cosponsored by the Energy Future Coalition, the American Lung Association, the National Institute of Environmental Health, and EESI brought together some of the nation's leading health and particulate experts. The health impacts of ultra-fine particulates linked to gasoline exhaust were convincingly documented. In follow-up workshops, growing evidence was presented by auto experts and others who link these ultra-fine particulates to light-duty vehicle fuel emissions.

For more information on the issue of mobile source air toxics, please contact Jessie Stolark [jstolark@eesi.org](mailto:jstolark@eesi.org) or (202) 662-1885 and visit [www.urbanairinitiative.com](http://www.urbanairinitiative.com).

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