

October 19, 2020

*Via Federal eRulemaking Portal*

Bryan Manning,  
Office of Transportation and Air Quality,  
Assessment and Standards Division (ASD),  
Environmental Protection Agency,  
2000 Traverwood Drive,  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

**Re: [Docket No.: EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0276]**

**Request to Withdraw and Replace the Proposed Rule for Greenhouse Gas Emission Standards and Test Procedures for Airplanes and Airplane Engines**

**Dear Mr. Manning:**

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we write to urge you to withdraw the Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") do-nothing proposed rule for greenhouse emissions from commercial aircraft, 85 Fed. Reg. 51,556 ("Proposed Rule"). While a rule to regulate the aviation industry's growing share of greenhouse gas emissions is long overdue, the Proposed Rule will not protect public health and fails to address the unfolding climate emergency. The proposed standards mirror standards adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization ("ICAO") in 2017 following an industry-controlled process designed to maintain business as usual. In fact, EPA acknowledges that the Proposed Rule does nothing to reduce emissions.

For the following reasons, we call on you to withdraw the proposed rule and quickly replace it with strong, technology-forcing standards that rapidly decarbonize the aviation industry in line with what climate science and equity demand.

***Commercial Aviation Is Increasingly Fueling the Climate Emergency and the ICAO Standard will do Nothing to Slow that Trend***

We are in a climate emergency. Status quo operation of the aviation industry is incompatible with global efforts to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Commercial aviation accounts for about 2.6% of annual global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions—roughly the same amount of climate pollution as Germany emits. Global aviation emissions increased by 44% over the last ten years as growing passenger traffic outpaced fuel efficiency improvements. Ahead of the coronavirus pandemic, emissions were set to triple again by 2050. Flights departing from airports in the United States and its territories were responsible for almost a full quarter of global passenger aviation related carbon dioxide emissions in 2018.

A 2018 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made clear that global industry sectors must decarbonize by mid-century to keep warming to 1.5°C and avoid devastating climate damages. But emissions from the aviation sector alone are on pace to total

approximately 56 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from 2015-2050. This would constitute more than a quarter of the emissions consistent with keeping global temperature rise below 1.5°C.

The ICAO standards will do nothing to alter the catastrophic growth trajectory of aviation pollution. They are years behind the existing technology curve, will not reduce emissions from new planes beyond business as usual, and do not apply to any in-service aircraft. A recent report found that the average plane delivered in 2019 already did better than ICAO's standard for 2028.

ICAO and aviation executives falsely claim that the rule will somehow achieve “carbon neutrality” using carbon offsets and biofuels. These are false solutions. Carbon offsets schemes do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions and toxic co-pollutants from airplanes that disproportionately harm low-income communities of color. Offset projects can also have many other adverse consequences, including violating the human rights of local communities and Indigenous peoples in the Global South. Biofuels by and large have not proven to be carbon-neutral or sustainable. For example, some jet biofuels derived from palm feedstocks actually increase overall emissions when accounting for all factors of production including land-use change.

### ***Aviation Pollution Can and Must Be Reduced Dramatically***

The EPA tries to justify the Proposed Rule by claiming it will “promote international harmonization” and “avoid placing U.S. manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage.” But under the Clean Air Act, these vague rationales cannot replace EPA's obligation to protect public health and welfare by reducing and preventing pollution. The climate emergency and Clean Air Act mandates require that the EPA set a strong, technology-forcing standard. Given the limited time left to sharply reduce greenhouse gas emissions, EPA cannot lawfully allow aircraft to continue to emit on a business-as-usual course as proposed.

To effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the aviation sector, EPA should set a declining fleetwide average standard that: (1) applies to aircraft in operation, not just to new aircraft; (2) allows for reducing emissions through both airframe design and operational improvements; and (3) includes a ratchet mechanism to reduce emissions over time and achieve zero emissions by 2045 or sooner.

We support a multi-prong strategy of improving fuel efficiency by at least 3.5% annually, electrifying all short-haul flights by 2040, and electrifying all long-haul flights by 2045. Doing so is possible and necessary to approach the near-zero emissions levels required to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

To prevent runaway climate chaos, the federal government should deploy all tools available to drive full decarbonization of the aviation sector, while also investing in sustainable, just, and equitable transportation alternatives.

Modernizing and decarbonizing the aviation industry is necessary if it is to survive in a carbon-constrained world. Strong, technology-forcing standards will drive these needed changes and create good, family-sustaining jobs in the aviation sector. Our organizations support additional government action to protect aviation workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and as needed to

ensure a just transition to a clean energy future. The Proposed Rule, by contrast, not only threatens to lock in climate chaos, it also endangers aviation workers' future by hampering the industry's ability to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The undersigned organizations agree that we must immediately and significantly reduce carbon emissions from the aviation sector to prevent devastating warming of our planet and protect the public from harmful air pollution. We therefore urge you to withdraw this Proposed Rule and commit to a rule that will avoid climate catastrophe.

Sincerely,

1. Center for Biological Diversity
2. Earthjustice
3. Friends of the Earth
4. AbibiNsroma Foundation
5. Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
6. Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
7. Animas Valley Institute
8. Anthropocene Alliance
9. Azul
10. Berks Gas Truth
11. Big Reuse
12. BOS Fair Skies
13. Center for Climate Change and Health
14. Christians For The Mountains
15. Church Women United in New York State
16. CleanAirNow
17. Climate Defense Project
18. Climate Justice Alliance
19. Committee for Aviation Transparency
20. Coordinadora de Pueblos y Organizaciones del Oriente del Estado de México en Defensa de la Tierra, el Agua y su Cultura (CPOOEM)
21. Corporate Ethics International
22. Courage California
23. Deep Green Resistance New York City
24. Dogwood Alliance
25. Earth Action, Inc.
26. Earthworks
27. Eastie Farm
28. Eco-Eating
29. Elders Climate Action
30. Endangered Habitats League
31. Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
32. Faithful America
33. Flight Free USA
34. Food & Water Action
35. Frack Free Catskills
36. FracTracker Alliance
37. Franciscan Action Network
38. Fund for Wild Nature
39. Global Justice Ecology Project
40. Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
41. Greenbelt Climate Action Network
42. Greenpeace USA
43. Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
44. Idle No More SF Bay
45. Indigenous Environmental Network
46. Inspiration of Sedona
47. Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
48. Interfaith Oceans
49. Jewish Climate Action Network - MA
50. Kickapoo Peace Circle
51. KyotoUSA
52. Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network

53. Logan Aircraft Noise Working Group
54. Montgomery County Quiet Skies Coalition
55. National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
56. NC WARN
57. Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH)
58. No Jets Santa Monica Airport
59. Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council
60. Nuclear Information and Resource Service
61. Ocean Conservation Research
62. Oceanic Preservation Society
63. Oil Change International
64. Oregon Aviation Watch
65. Palo Alto Citizens
66. Pelican Media
67. Physicians for Social Responsibility Colorado
68. Power Shift Network
69. Poweshiek Jasper Green Party
70. Progressive Democrats of America
71. Public Citizen
72. Public Lands Project
73. Rachel Carson Council
74. Rapid Shift Network
75. Resource Renewal Institute
76. Riverdale Jewish Earth Alliance
77. Sacred America
78. San Juan Citizens Alliance
79. SanDiego350
80. Save Our Skies East Bay
81. SAVE THE FROGS!
82. Sequoia ForestKeeper®
83. Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
84. Sky Justice Miami
85. SoCal 350 Climate Action
86. South San Juan Broadband of Great Old Broads for Wilderness
87. Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
88. Sunflower Alliance
89. Syracuse Cultural Workers
90. The Climate Center
91. The Climate Mobilization North Jersey
92. The Climate Reality Project San Diego Chapter
93. The River Project
94. Transition Sebastopol
95. Turtle Island Restoration Network
96. Unexpected Wildlife Refuge
97. Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
98. Valley Watch, Inc.
99. Vashon Island Fair Skies
100. Vote-Climate
101. Wasatch Clean Air Coalition
102. WATCH, Inc.
103. WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
104. Young Democrats of America Environmental Caucus
105. Youth vs Apocalypse
106. 100Grannies Iowa City
107. 350 Mass Metro North Node
108. 350 Santa Cruz/Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
109. 350 Seattle
110. 350 Triangle
111. 350NH
112. 350PDX