



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Breathe Project Statement on Air Quality and Climate Change-Influenced Conditions Today

Pittsburgh, Pa. – Climate change is impacting the lives of people across the country, especially in the U.S. Northeast including Pittsburgh, producing unusual conditions that impact our lives in increasingly disruptive ways. Among our concerns this week:

- Air quality levels forecasted in the Unhealthy (AQI > 150) range from fine particles (PM 2.5) from wildfire smoke blowing from Canada into the U.S. The scale of these wildfires, as well as the stalled low-pressure system to the northeast, are both exacerbated patterns likely stemming from climate change. This pollution mixes with and adds to existing pollution levels from local sources of air pollution, such as large point source facilities, such as coking plants, steel plants and petrochemical processing plants.
- Disruptions to our lives because of these unhealthy air quality levels. People should avoid prolonged exposure to outdoor air when the AQI is rated orange or higher. Today monitors are likely to be in the EPA "Code Red" range. (See the [PA DEP's Air Quality Alert](#).)
- High risks to our most vulnerable populations. People with health conditions are especially at risk of exposure to air pollution.
- Disruptions to industry. The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) has continued, for a second day, a "Mon Valley Episode Pollution Warning," which requires industries in the Mon Valley to "continue to temporarily reduce particulate emissions."

This situation highlights the importance of the connection between our health, our lives and our climate. We all have an interest in reducing climate pollution so that the risks of these disruptions decrease.

"We call upon policymakers and leaders to take note so that they can take action to reduce our dependencies on climate-disrupting fossil fuels, to pursue policies that center health and climate, and to recognize these sorts of disruptions will only end when we start working together for a healthier future," said Matt Mehalik, executive director of the Breathe Project.

Useful resources:

Airnow.gov fire and smoke map: <https://fire.airnow.gov/?lat=40.44233000000003&lng=-79.98049499999996&zoom=8>

Airnow.gov AQI information: <https://www.airnow.gov/?city=Pittsburgh&state=PA&country=USA>

Purple Air sensor network: <https://map.purpleair.com/1/mAQI/a10/p604800/cC0#10.87/40.4391/-80.0059>

Breathe Project Tech Tools: <https://breatheproject.org/tech-tools/>

What you can do to take action: <https://breatheproject.org/take-action/>

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