

Critics attack EPA ozone standard proposal

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A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposal to revise the nation's ground-level ozone standard drew quick criticism Thursday.

The Union of Concerned Scientists said the new draft ozone pollution regulations fall short of the standard recommended by the EPA's own scientific experts and should be lowered even farther, while the National Association of Manufacturers called for maintaining the current rules.

The UCS said the proposed standard could allow the agency to avoid tightening the standard altogether, despite unanimous agreement from its own scientists and science advisers that the current standard is not safe.

On the other side of the debate, NAM President John Engler said his organization opposes any move to a more stringent standard.

"Over the last generation, emissions of key air pollutants have dropped by more than 54 percent," said Engler. "Even though a lot has been done and spent, there is still a long way to go to meeting the current standard. Therefore we see no reason to revise the current standard."

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