



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.2369/S.1548
AN ACT TO ENSURE CLEANER AIR FOR COMMUNITIES OVERBURDENED BY
OUTDOOR AIR POLLUTION
BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
September 10, 2025**

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) wishes to be recorded in support of H.2369/S.1548, *An Act to ensure cleaner air for communities overburdened by outdoor air pollution.*

The MMS is a professional association of over 23,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The MMS is committed to advocating on behalf of patients for a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them to provide the best care possible. Over the years, the Society has increased its policymaking and advocacy on issues at the critical intersection of environmental justice and public health. We recognize the important connection between environmental justice and public health and the critical impact that environmental policy has on the health of the residents of the Commonwealth where communities of color and low-income communities are disproportionately harmed by environmental impacts. In particular, air pollution is known to correlate with numerous adverse health outcomes, including heart disease, stroke, asthma and COPD, and air pollution disproportionately affects environmental justice communities and communities of color.

Given these known impacts, we seek to support policies that will increase enforcement of stricter air quality standards, working towards improving ambient air quality to a maximum of the 25µg/m³ 24-hour standard in alignment with recommendations by the American Medical Association in order to promote and protect the health of vulnerable populations in Massachusetts. Additionally, we further recognize the association between gas stoves and asthma and the importance of EPA indoor air quality standards being enforced in primary and secondary schools. Finally, MMS policy acknowledges that social determinants of health, such as the disproportionate distribution of air pollution in underrepresented communities, play a key role in health outcomes and disparities. MMS supports policies aimed at improving social

determinants of health for all people.

H.2369/S.1548, *An Act to ensure cleaner air for communities overburdened by outdoor air pollution*, would require the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to install air monitors to detect pollutants, including black carbon and ultrafine particulate matter, in air pollution hotspots within environmental justice communities. This monitoring will establish a baseline of air pollution in these hotspots and set targets for reduction of pollution in these hotspots by 2035. An analysis of the inequitable distribution of exposure to motor vehicle exhaust in Massachusetts found that residents of color in Massachusetts are exposed to 26 - 36% more pollution from vehicle emissions than white residents.¹ Targeting air pollution hotspots in environmental justice communities with a data driven approach will drive meaningful reduction of air pollution and represent a step forward in health equity in Massachusetts.

This legislation also appropriately calls for the installation of air filters in existing eligible buildings, such as schools, public housing and correctional facilities as well as mandating advanced HVAC filtration systems for newly built eligible buildings, including daycare facilities. Breathing polluted air is linked to a number of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. This legislation will improve indoor air quality for children and others, while reducing the inequitable impact of air pollution and taking a step towards greater health equity within Massachusetts.

A 2022 study² by researchers at Boston College Researchers at Boston College analyzed health and air pollution data from across the state and pinpointed the areas in Massachusetts with the worst pollution and associated health outcomes. The researchers found that while air-pollution-related disease, death and IQ loss disproportionately harms low-income, minority communities in the state, these negative health outcomes occur in every city and town in Massachusetts regardless of location, demographics or median family income.

¹ <https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2019/06/Inequitable-Exposure-to-Vehicle-Pollution-MA.pdf>

² Landrigan PJ, Fisher S, Kenny ME, et al. A replicable strategy for mapping air pollution's community-level health impacts and catalyzing prevention. *Environ Health*. 2022 Jul 18;21(1):70. doi: 10.1186/s12940-022-00879-3. PMID: 35843932; PMCID: PMC9288863.

The researchers showed that air pollution in Massachusetts, most of which comes from cars and other vehicles, leads to an estimated 2,780 deaths a year — roughly 5 percent of the total number of deaths in the state. 1677 of those deaths are from cardiovascular disease, 2185 from lung cancer, 200 from stroke, and 343 from chronic respiratory disease. PM2.5 air pollution was shown to be responsible for premature deaths in every county, in every city and in all but the very smallest towns in Massachusetts. Other harmful health effects were also identified, from asthma and low birth weights to lower IQs in children growing up in areas with higher pollution levels. In children, PM2.5 air pollution was responsible for 308 low-weight births, 15,386 asthma cases, and a provisionally estimated collective loss of nearly 2 million performance IQ points. IQ loss impairs children's school performance, reduces graduation rates and decreases lifetime earnings.

This bill aims to improve air quality in communities that experience high levels of outdoor air pollution, particularly those identified as environmental justice populations, since Black and Latino residents experience levels of air pollution 26 to 34% higher than white residents of the state. It proposes the establishment of a technical advisory committee to assess air pollution hotspots and recommend air monitoring and filtration systems for various types of buildings near major pollution sources. The committee would also identify funding sources to support the installation of air filtration systems and set targets for reducing air pollution levels over time. Additionally, the bill emphasizes public access to air quality data and community involvement in monitoring efforts.

Massachusetts can be a leader in safeguarding the health of all Massachusetts residents by protecting the air we breathe. We ask that you give H. 2369/S.1548 a favorable report, which will increase the ability of those who live and work in the Commonwealth to contribute to society and live meaningful, rewarding lives. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.