

On 100th Anniversary of Lead Phase-Out Experts Sound the Alarm on Similar Health Threat

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A diverse group of academics, authors, and public policy veterans who have spent decades studying and writing about the health disaster that resulted from the approval of lead in gasoline, observed the 100-year "anniversary" of that ill-fated decision by warning of similar dangers from today's additives.

“

A lot of parents don't know that when these kids are chronically breathing certain airborne toxins that they have higher rates of neurodevelopmental problems, learning disabilities, and even autism.”

*Debra Hendrickson, M.D.
Clinical Professor & Author*

In a [letter to incoming Department of Justice official Adam Gustafson](#), the experts urged him to compel EPA compliance with mandatory Clean Air Act (CAA) provisions requiring reduction of toxic octane additives that have replaced lead. Mr. Gustafson has been nominated to serve as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General at the Environment & Natural Resources Division, which would have jurisdiction and authority to enforce CAA requirements. The group appealed to Gustafson because of this key position and his history of calling out EPA's failure to control deadly mobile source air toxics (MSATs) produced by the oil-derived, benzene-based BTEX octane enhancers utilized by the petroleum industry.

The letter coincides with a [virtual symposium](#) (Passcode: 1925) taking place on Tuesday, May 20 at 10 a.m. EST by noted historian and author Dr. William Kovarik, the Public Health Service Leaded Gasoline Centennial Forum.

“In May of 1925 the U.S Public Health Service concluded that despite known health impacts from lead there was insufficient evidence to ban it. EPA has allowed the replacement of poisonous lead with toxic carcinogenic compounds that represent a health threat on an even grander scale,” Kovarik said. “EPA's negligence is an abuse of the public trust and is costing America literally trillions of dollars and millions of ruined lives.”

The virtual event will launch a “Stop the Sequel” campaign to rally public opposition to EPA's failure to act. “We have seen this movie before in terms of negative health impacts,” said Reid Detchon, Senior Advisor for Climate Solutions at the United Nations Foundation, who also signed

the letter. "Let's not have a sequel. In his new position, Adam Gustafson has the knowledge and expertise to address this issue," he said.

While a partner in the law firm of Boyden Gray & Associates, Gustafson authored a [2016 memo](#) on behalf of client Urban Air Initiative (and subsequently made publicly available) warning of the serious and rapidly expanding BTEX health threat: "Air toxic pollution from gasoline-powered motor vehicles kills thousands of persons in the United States every year. Most of these mortalities are attributable to aromatic hydrocarbons [BTEX]... that are added to gasoline to raise octane...and make up about 25% of every gallon of gasoline."

Pediatrician Dr. Debra Hendrickson, author of "The Air They Breathe," says education is critical: "A lot of parents don't know that when these kids are chronically breathing certain airborne toxins that they have higher rates of neurodevelopmental problems, learning disabilities, and even autism."

Gustafson's memo also confirmed that the Clean Air Act's "laser-focused" statutory language compels EPA to act: "This duty is mandatory, and it is technology-forcing: EPA's required air toxic controls must 'reflect the greatest degree of emission reduction achievable through the application of technology which will be available'."

Doug Durante
Clean Fuels Development Coalition
+1 301-718-0077

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/813832668>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.