

CLEAN AIR 4 PARKS

HEALTH FACT SHEET



WINTER 2016

“The San Joaquin Valley has some of the poorest air quality in the nation. This dirty air not only affects the health of area residents, but also the ecosystems within the Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, causing damage to the native plants, animals, and natural vistas.”

— **Destiny Rodriguez**
Director of Outreach and Communications at Central California Asthma Collaborative



npca.org

Top: Grand Canyon Overlook ©Andrushko Galyna | Bigstockphoto.com Above: Hiking in the National Parks ©Pamela Moore | Dreamstime.com

Health & Haze

In the fight for healthy air, laws limiting haze pollution are powerful tools – but we need to act now to sharpen them. To win the fight for clean and healthy air, deploying all means to lower pollution—like ozone and particulate matter—is a necessity.

The Regional Haze Rule is a critical tool to tackle health harming pollutants. Its mission? To eliminate dirty haze over national parks and wilderness areas. Because the pollution causing haze in America’s national parks is also harming health in our communities, cleaning up park haze will result in better health nationwide.

We have made great strides in reducing air pollution thanks to the rule, and now the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering changes to it. A clearer, more stringent Regional Haze Rule—one that truly holds polluters accountable—is key to unlocking healthy air. We need your help to demand that EPA make the rule stronger in order to deliver significant benefits to public health and national parks!

Improving Public Health

According to the [EPA](#), “During much of the year, a veil of white or brown haze hangs over many of the country’s most visited natural areas. The same pollution that causes haze also poses serious health risks, especially for people with chronic respiratory diseases.”

The Regional Haze Rule has already improved air quality—meaning fewer of the asthma attacks, lung cancers, neurological problems, and deaths associated with haze pollution. These health benefits are tremendous but by no means guaranteed in the future unless we strengthen the Regional Haze Rule now.

Health Benefits of the Regional Haze Rule*



1,600
FEWER DEATHS



170,000
FEWER LOST WORK DAYS



1,000,000
FEWER RESTRICTED ACTIVITY DAYS



31,000
FEWER ASTHMA ATTACKS



46,000
FEWER BREATHING PROBLEMS



1,300
FEWER VISITS FOR ASTHMA

AMONG ADULTS

AMONG CHILDREN

* Projected annual health benefits in 2015, according to the EPA.

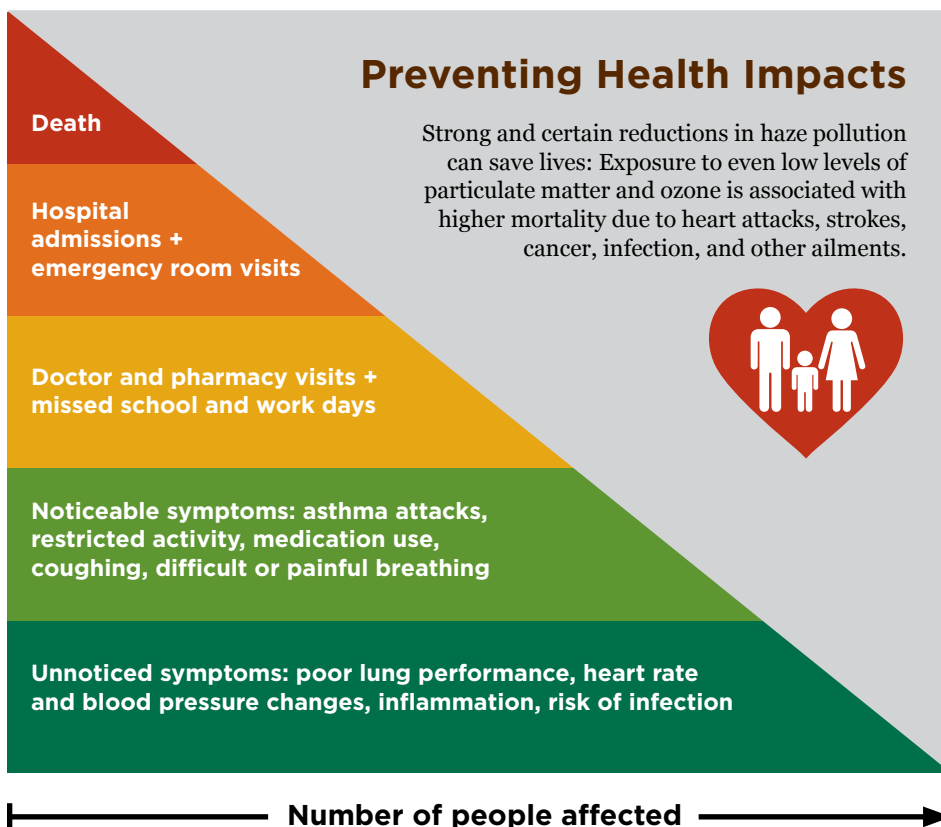
Less Haze



Haze is made of particulate matter and gases that block light, reducing visibility while jeopardizing public health. The air pollution that causes haze comes from a variety of sources, including coal-fired power plants, oil and gas operations, and vehicles. Emissions from these sources are regulated under the current Regional Haze Rule and with clearer, more stringent requirements, we anticipate steeper reductions in:

- **Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) & Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂):** Both are direct and indirect sources of particulate matter.
- **Ozone:** NO_x is a component of ozone, so reducing NO_x means less pollution.
- **Carbon Dioxide, Mercury and Other Toxic Emissions:** When haze pollution is reduced or eliminated, these pollutants also often decrease.

The Regional Haze Rule has already helped drive the retirement of many old polluting power plants, the switch to cleaner fuels, and more energy efficiency. As a result, key pollutants that harm health decline as we clean up park air. A stronger Regional Haze Rule that secures measurable pollution reductions would mean clearer skies in national parks and less unhealthy pollution throughout the country.



Healthier Air

Protecting Vulnerable Populations

In or out of national parks, less haze equals better health for kids. Their still-developing bodies are particularly vulnerable to the effects of haze-related pollution. It's linked to illness throughout childhood—from low birth weight and infant mortality to ear infections and asthma.

And it's not just kids who are affected. Older people and those with heart and lung conditions are also at higher risk. Haze harms even otherwise healthy adults. In fact, anyone who is active outdoors and in parks is at risk because when we exercise, we breathe up to ten times more air than normal, bringing it more deeply into our lungs.



Top: The Navajo Generating Station, the nation's eighth largest coal-fired plant, is just outside Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and only 12 miles from Grand Canyon National Park. ©Frontpage | Shutterstock **Above:** Enjoying the day ©Monkey Business Images | Dreamstime.com • Canoeing in Gateway National Recreation Area ©Michael Falco

YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

Please join our efforts to protect national parks and safeguard public health by strengthening the Regional Haze Rule!

Visit the CleanAir4Parks website or contact:

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