



March 20, 2026

Statement by Sarita Hudson, Senior Director of Strategy & Development at the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts for the **Massachusetts Attorney General's Office' virtual briefing on the office's legal challenge to the repeal of the EPA's Endangerment Finding.**

Through the Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition, the Public Health Institute of Western MA has been leading efforts in our region for nearly 20 years to address the high rates of asthma and the inequities experienced by people of color, who end up in the emergency room or hospitalized at a rate *2 to 3 times* that of White residents in Massachusetts. For two years in a row, the Greater Springfield area ranked as the *#1 Asthma Capital in the country*. In 2020, Massachusetts Attorney General Office provided funding to the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts and Yale University's School of Public Health to start the Healthy Air Network—a local network to measure neighborhood level air pollution and share that data and guidance with community members so they can make informed decisions to protect themselves when air quality is poor.

Our collaboration with community organization, municipalities and community residents now has over 150 local air sensors across the state and we are set to launch our Healthy Air app in the coming weeks so residents with asthma COPD and heart disease and other sensitive groups can get notifications on their phones where air quality in their neighborhoods can impact their health so they can take precautions---whether the pollution is from traffic, bus idling, wildfires, or other point sources.

The science is clear: vehicle and other GHG emissions are a risk factor for asthma, as well as other health issues. We see the impact in our region where people who live, work, go to school and play near heavily trafficked areas are impacted. The analysis of the air sensor data from our network has shown that major sources of air pollution in Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke are gas and diesel vehicles. Another key source has been wildfire smoke which seems to now be a regular occurrence.

Taking away the protection and support of the Endangerment Finding puts our already vulnerable communities at risk. The EPA has rolled this back despite mounting scientific evidence and in the face of the real health impacts of air pollution, extreme heat and other extreme weather that we are seeing on a regular basis.

We discussed the endangerment finding and the loss of EPA funding at our Advisory Board meeting last month. The message from our Residents Advisors is: We have to persevere, the fight continues, People have the power to make change. Thank you to Attorney General Campbell and to her team for taking on this fight for healthy air and environmental justice.

Our coalition will continue to educate, advocate and take action to protect our environment, our health and our communities.