

# **The State of the Air in Virginia**

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# State of the Air Report

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For 18 years, the American Lung Association has analyzed data from official air quality monitors to compile the "State of the Air" report. The more you learn about the air you breathe, the more you can protect your health and take steps to make our air cleaner and healthier.

What's the State of Your Air?

State:

Zip code:

 AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION®

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# Why do we publish State of the Air?



Millions of reasons

# What State of the Air Does



- Puts air pollution information into everyday language
- Provides very local information
- Focuses attention on ozone and particle pollution

# What is the State of the Air report?

- 18<sup>th</sup> annual look at air pollution
- Gives **A - F** Grades or **Pass/Fail** to 900 counties with monitors (out of 3,069 counties)
- Ranks 25 metro areas with worst pollution (& cleanest)
- Access county, state info by zip code

# Why tell people about air quality?



Someone in every family faces higher risk from air pollution

# Children, teens face higher risk

Children, teens have growing lungs, spend more time outdoors, inhale more air per pound.



# Older adults face higher risk



Aging brings a gradual decline in the body's systems that makes us more vulnerable.

# Chronic diseases increase risk from air pollution



**Having asthma or other lung diseases, cardiovascular disease or diabetes puts you at higher risk.**

# People with lung cancer at risk from air pollution



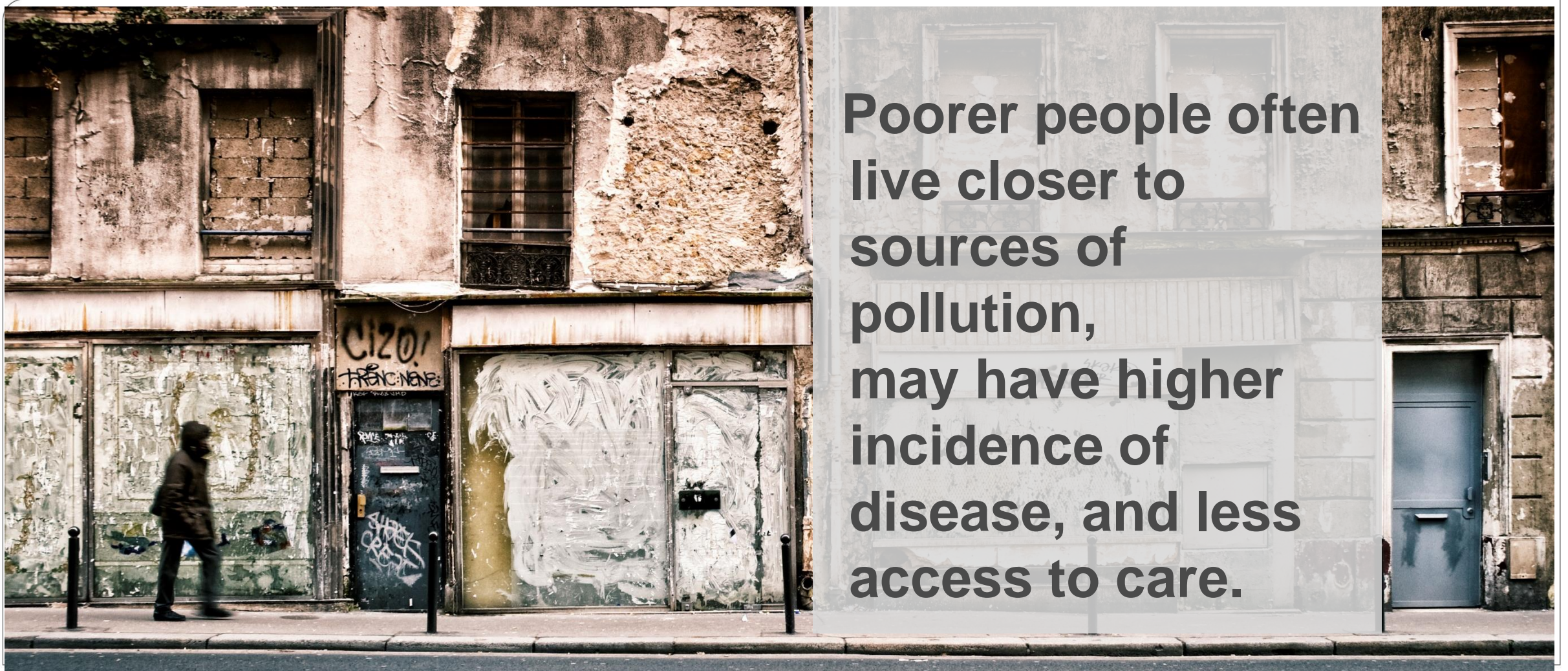
New research finds that Having **lung cancer** also puts you at higher risk from air pollution.

# Even healthy adults can face increased risk.



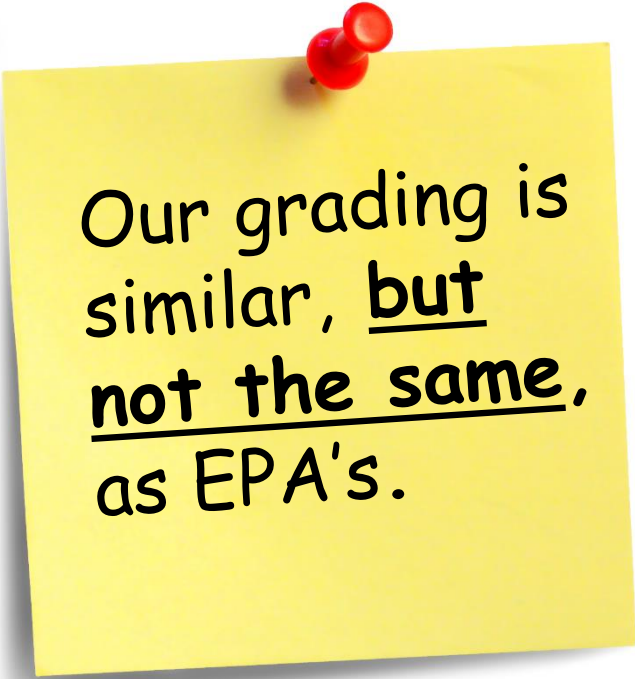
Working or exercising outdoors increases exposure, especially near highways.

# People with low incomes face increased risk.



Poorer people often live closer to sources of pollution, may have higher incidence of disease, and less access to care.

# What we grade



Our grading is similar, but not the same, as EPA's.

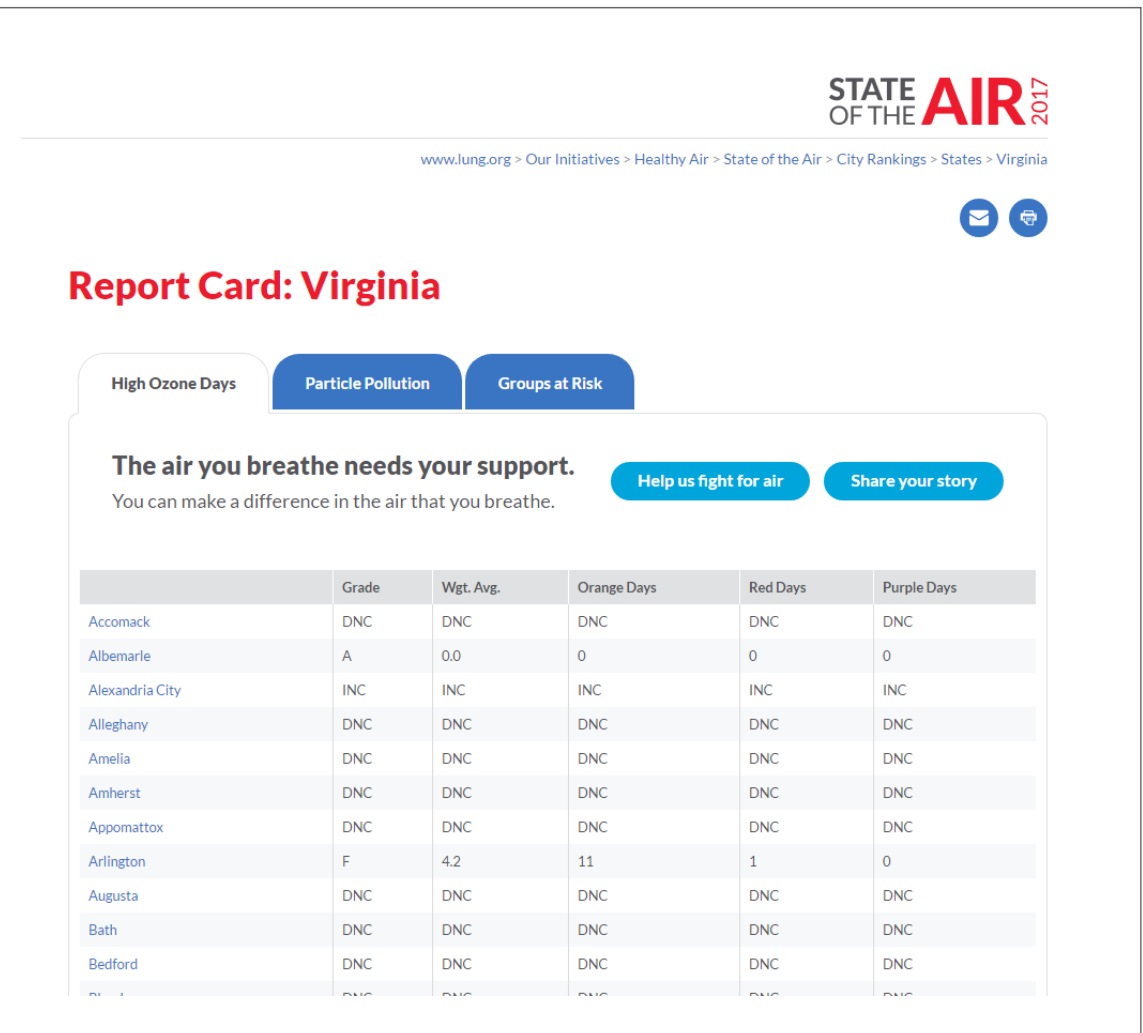
- **Ozone (smog)**
  - Number of days with high 8-hour averages
- **Particle pollution (soot, PM<sub>2.5</sub>)**
  - Short-term (24-hour) measures –number of days with high 24-hr averages, AKA “spikes”
  - Year-round (annual average) measures “day-in and day-out”
- Only counties with monitors get grades
- Grade only air quality—not “effort to clean up”

# Key Findings from 2017 Report

- Overall improvement nationwide.
- Nearly 4 in 10 people (38.9 percent) in the United States live in counties that have unhealthy levels of either ozone or particle pollution.
- The Clean Air Act, passed in 1970, has worked but faces major threats.

# In Virginia

- Groups at risk:
  - 158,522 with Pediatric Asthma
  - 517,678 Adult Asthma
  - 374,856 living with COPD
- One failing county for Ozone (Arlington)
- Several VA cities on “Cleanest Cities” list



# In Virginia

According to the Virginia  
Department of Health (2013):

**9%** Adults in  
Virginia with  
asthma

**6%** High schools students  
visited an ER or Urgent  
Care because of  
asthma in the past year

Virginia in 2013

**8,646** People  
hospitalized due  
to Asthma

**\$18,853**  
Average Asthma Hospitalization  
Charge

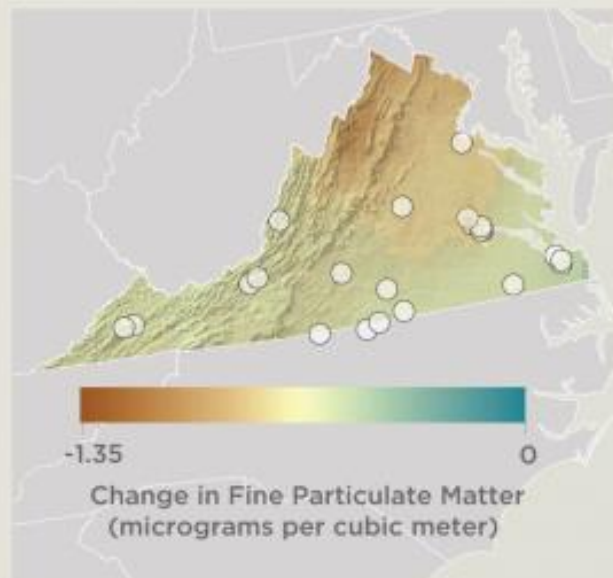
**\$163,002,568**  
Total Asthma Hospitalization  
Charges

# VIRGINIA: A Health Benefits Hotspot

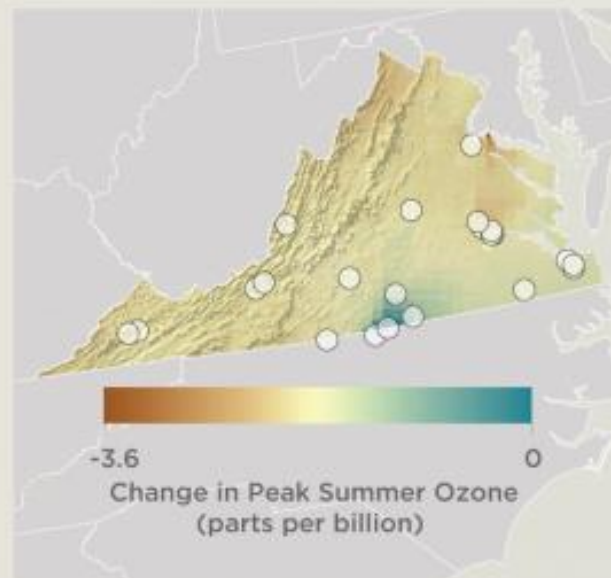
## AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF A POWER PLANT CARBON STANDARD

VIRGINIA'S AIR

SOOT Reduced in 2020



SMOG Reduced in 2020



○ Operating Coal Plants

VIRGINIA'S HEALTH

Cumulative Lives Saved  
from 2020 to 2030



1200

Cumulative Hospitalizations Prevented  
from 2020 to 2030



340

Cumulative Heart Attacks Prevented  
from 2020 to 2030



80

THESE MAPS SHOW: Reductions in fine particulate matter and peak summer ozone, and the resulting health benefits under Policy Scenario 2 compared to the 2020 reference case. For soot and smog, negative values = lower pollution. The health benefits assume a linear increase from the 2020 annual estimate. By comparison, Scenario 1 resulted in 50 additional premature deaths, and Scenario 3 resulted in 1100 lives saved. Source: *Health Co-benefits of Carbon Standards for Existing Power Plants*. [www.chgeharvard.org/health-co-benefits](http://www.chgeharvard.org/health-co-benefits).

# Advocacy Goals for 2017



1. **Defend the Clean Air Act** from attacks at the federal and state level.
2. Continue to fight attacks on the Clean Power Plan and other policies that address climate change.
3. Call for adequate funding for EPA and states.

# A Declaration on Climate Change and Health



As leading public health, disease advocacy and medical organizations, we reiterate our longstanding commitment to addressing climate change as a public health issue. The statement below articulates our consensus on the health impacts of climate change and the need for action to protect public health.

- The health impacts of climate change demand **immediate action**.
- The **science is clear**; communities across the nation are experiencing the health impacts of climate change, including:

# Real stories

## *Hartford Courant*

### U.S. environment chief uses humor, health argument to sell carbon plan

Environment Correspondent Deborah Zabarenko

Reuters

5:23 PM EDT, September 20, 2013

McCarthy became emotional at times when she discussed the health problems caused by smog, such as the life-threatening Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) that afflicts Daniel Dolan-Laughlin, a retired railroad executive from Wheaton, Illinois.

"Daniel's health has improved significantly after he received a double lung transplant," she said. "Last year Daniel came to EPA to tell his story. He made a specific plea: he asked us to act on climate change."



#### Dan Dolan-Laughlin

- Volunteer with ALA in IL
- Double lung transplant recipient (COPD)
- Regularly authors LTEs, opeds; joins meetings with decision-makers. Testified at EPA hearing.
- Featured in EPA rollout of carbon stds.
- Honored by the White House

# How You Can Help



New **nationwide** initiative of the American Lung Association to recruit and mobilize health leaders and advocates **in all 50 states** for rapid response calls and messages to decision-makers in Washington, DC.

## How You Can Help

- Help us spread the word by sharing these links:
  - [StateoftheAir.org](http://StateoftheAir.org)
  - Action alert to defend the Clean Air Act: <http://bit.ly/2pqfGRY>
  - Video inviting people to share their air pollution stories: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWlh1YkQ6XQ>
  - Retweet from @LungAssociation
- Tweet and post to Facebook using #StateoftheAir and #SaveOurLungs
  - Sample Tweet:  
The #CleanAirAct has driven big improvements in the air we breathe.  
Support #CleanAir4Kids at [stateoftheair.org](http://stateoftheair.org) #StateoftheAir

Thank you.