



For Immediate Release:
November 20, 2007

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Associated Industries, an Advocate of Environmentally Oriented Business Practices, Calls on Governor Crist, EPA to Stand with Proven Success

~Proposed Ozone Rule Creates Questionable Health Benefits, Indisputable Risks~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Businesses from across the state called on Governor Charlie Crist today to oppose a proposed rule change on ground-level ozone, saying that unnecessary regulations would endanger thousands of jobs and economic development with uncertain health benefits. A needless rule change would result in higher energy costs and job losses for Florida companies, Associated Industries leaders stated in a letter.

EPA's own studies show total air quality in the United States continues to improve, with emissions of key air pollutants having dropped by more than 54 percent from 1970-2006. These improvements come with a cost - a \$9.7 billion per year price tag spent by industry to implement the current ozone standard.

“A decision to move to a more stringent ozone standard – especially one that is not based on sound science – could have a devastating effect on Florida's manufacturers, their workers and their communities in the form of higher energy and transportation costs,” said Barney Bishop, president and CEO of Associated Industries of Florida. “With R&D, investment and just plain hard work, Florida businesses have spent enormous amounts of money to meet these standards and achieve cleaner air and we will continue to do so. After all, we breathe the air here, too.”

In Florida, currently no counties are designated as being in non-attainment, and are therefore not targeted by federal regulators. If the EPA chooses its lowest recommended range of 60 parts per billion, 39 counties would face reclassification, targeting the vast majority of the state's business and industry.

Associated Industries, which represents ten-thousand employers statewide, says imposing new and unachievable standards will not help the environment or quality of life, but will lead to damaging livelihoods and the economic health of communities.

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“As you know, Florida is currently experiencing a great fiscal challenge,” Bishop added. “We are in the midst of a property insurance and property tax crisis and our state’s housing market is in decline. We respectfully suggest that now is not the time to subject our state and its residents to these unnecessary and costly compliance costs.”

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Note: A copy of the letter is attached.