

October 27, 2026

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Abigale Tardif
Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Air and Radiation

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460
Sent via email

RE: EPA Air Toxics Cancer Risk Data

Dear Administrator Zeldin and Acting Assistant Administrator Tardif:

We write to request an explanation for the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) apparent decision to stop publishing updated cancer risk estimates through the Air Toxics Screening Assessment, or AirToxScreen. We urge EPA to restore this important public health information.

For more than two decades, AirToxScreen and its predecessor, the National Air Toxics Assessment, have helped EPA; state, local and Tribal air agencies; researchers; public health advocates; and communities understand potential health risks from hazardous air pollutants. EPA continues to describe AirToxScreen as a tool that provides communities with information about health risks from air toxics and provides updated data and risk analyses on an annual basis.

Yet EPA's most recent AirToxScreen update does not include the cancer risk estimates that have historically been included in the assessment, integrating the raw data into a format that conveys risk and is usable by researchers, agencies, and communities. EPA has made 2021 emissions and concentration information available, but its public cancer risk results and mapping tool stop with the 2020 assessment.

EPA has not publicly explained whether it has stopped calculating these risks, why these estimates were not published, or whether the agency intends to resume publication in future assessments. Even when recently asked about the missing information, EPA said it would continue publishing emissions and concentration data but did not explain why the cancer risk estimates were absent.

This matters because AirToxScreen does more than provide raw emissions and concentration data. EPA previously combined modeled exposures with pollutant-specific toxicity information to estimate potential cancer and noncancer risks, including the combined cancer risk from multiple air toxics in a community. Those analyses turned complex data into information that state and local agencies, researchers, public health organizations, and communities can actually use to identify areas and pollution sources that may warrant closer examination.

Providing the underlying data without the risk characterization shifts the burden of recreating EPA's analysis onto the public, many of whom do not have the technical expertise or resources to do so. EPA's ability to provide estimates using consistent and transparent approaches has been crucial for communities and local agencies. EPA already has a well-established and publicly documented methodology for calculating these risks, developed and refined through years of scientific and science-policy review. The unexplained omission of these risk estimates from the latest AirToxScreen update is therefore deeply concerning.

We therefore ask EPA to answer three questions:

1. **Why did EPA omit publishing cancer risk estimates in the most recent update to AirToxScreen?** Please explain the decision regarding cancer risk and other health risk estimates in the 2021 AirToxScreen assessment, including when the decision was made, who made it, and the scientific, policy, resource, or other basis for it. Please make public any written directive, analysis, or other documentation related to the decision.
2. **Is EPA still calculating or using these risk estimates?** Does EPA possess 2021 cancer risk estimates, intermediate calculations, or comparable analyses that have not been released publicly? Is EPA continuing to calculate or use AirToxScreen cancer risk information internally for regulatory, enforcement, permitting, programmatic, or other purposes? If these analyses exist, we urge EPA to make them publicly available.
3. **Will EPA restore this information?** Please explain whether, and if so when, EPA intends to publish cancer risk and non-cancer hazard estimates for the 2021 AirToxScreen assessment and subsequent years and restore publicly accessible health risk information as part of its annual AirToxScreen updates.

EPA has long recognized that AirToxScreen is a screening tool, not a definitive assessment of any individual's risk. The appropriate response to those limitations is to explain the information carefully and transparently, not to withhold useful public health information. The administration also purports to seek to “Make America Healthy Again” (MAHA) and [Executive Order 14212](#) directed the MAHA Commission to evaluate the threat that “certain chemicals, and certain other exposures pose to children with respect to chronic inflammation or other established mechanisms of disease, using rigorous and transparent data.” The [MAHA Report](#) also identifies “children’s exposure to environmental chemicals” as a potential contributor to chronic childhood disease, including exposures through the air they breathe. EPA's unexplained decision to stop publishing a longstanding assessment of cancer risks from toxic air pollution is difficult to reconcile with those commitments.

Without these risk estimates, state, local, and Tribal agencies have less information to be able to inform their own cancer risk modeling; public health and environmental researchers are less able to evaluate cancer risks attributable to toxic air pollutants; and communities are left in the dark about the risks in their own backyards. We urge EPA to provide a direct, public explanation for this change and to restore the cancer risk and other health risk information that has historically made AirToxScreen immensely useful to the public.

We respectfully request a response within 30 days. If you have any questions, please contact Senior Policy Associate Olivia Davidson (olivia.davidson@environmentalprotectionnetwork.org).

Sincerely,

Environmental Protection Network
Union of Concerned Scientists