

This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **The Greenville News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Upstate Forever supports more stringent EPA ozone standards

Published: Sunday, November 11, 2007 - 7:48 am

By Nan Lundeen
STAFF WRITER
nlundeen@greenvillenews.com

Because protecting public health is the main goal of the Clean Air Act, the environmental group Upstate Forever supports tightening federal ozone standards, said Brad Wyche, the agency's executive director.

Upstate Forever's stance presented in a letter to the federal Environmental Protection Agency, whose staff recommended tighter standards based on studies, is at odds with a Greenville County Council resolution, which urges the EPA to leave the standards alone.

The county has made great strides in voluntarily reducing ozone levels and needs more time, the resolution said. Also, the EPA should wait to see effectiveness of reducing power plant emissions under the Clean Air Interstate Rule, it said.

Tightening standards would leave much of South Carolina in non-attainment and "would jeopardize local economic development," the resolution said.

Advertisement

"The county's resolution misses the point," Wyche wrote in an e-mail to *The Greenville News*. "The overriding objective of the Clean Air Act is the protection of public health."

Upstate Forever is a Greenville-based nonprofit agency promoting sensible growth and clean air and water, among other objectives.

The EPA writes on its Web site that exposure to ground-level ozone over several hours "at relatively low concentrations has been found to significantly reduce lung function and induce respiratory inflammation in normal healthy people during exercise."

Dr. Georges Benjamin, American Public Health Association executive director, said, "Ozone is a real irritant, particularly to the respiratory tract. It's really a significant problem for communities from a human health effect."

Wyche wrote, "Whether future rules will reduce power plant emissions, whether state and local measures will improve air quality, and whether economic development will be adversely affected are not relevant to the fundamental question of whether the current standard protects public health.

"The science on that question is clear it does not."

The EPA staff recommends lowering the standards to within a range of 0.070 to 0.075 parts per million from the current 0.080 ppm. Designations on attainment would take effect in 2010 based on 2007-2009 data, according to its Web site.

Nan Lundeen can be reached at 298-4316.
