

**Testimony**  
**EPA’s “Proposed Petroleum Refinery Sector Risk and Technology  
Review and New Source Performance Standards”**  
**Docket Number EPA-HQ-OAR-2010-0682**

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My name is Marcelo Norsworthy and I am a Research Analyst with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a non-partisan environmental organization with more than 750,000 members nationwide. For over two decades, EDF has worked to secure cleaner air and cleaner water for communities and families in Texas.

The proposed rule for petroleum refineries is vitally important in improving the public health of communities, ensuring that all families are protected from the hazardous air pollutants discharged from petrochemical refineries, and addressing long standing environmental justice burdens.

**Promoting Healthy Neighborhoods**

Oil refineries are a major source of hazardous air pollutants that can cause lung disease, skin disorders, headaches, and immune system ailment, and other health issues as well as increase the risk of cancer.

This proposal is critical to strengthening our nation’s protections against these serious ailments. Of particular importance is the proposal to add fence line monitoring of benzene. The entire stakeholder community will benefit from a measure which improves understanding of how much of the cancer-causing compound is emitted at a facility. Neighbors especially have a strong and abiding right to know about the toxic air pollutant discharges – and to ensure safeguards are adopted to protect human health.

**Protecting Our Communities and Families**

The concentration of hazardous air pollutant discharges from industrial facilities in Texas has serious impacts on human health and the environment.

For the approximately 60,000 residents of La Marque, TX and Texas City, TX, three adjacent petroleum refineries have a total operating capacity of 760,000 barrels of crude oil per day<sup>i</sup>. That represents more than 4% of domestic capacity that is handled in this small community.

Further up the coast at the three refineries near Port Arthur, TX, the approximately 55,000 residents live in a community that houses more than 1.1 million barrels of crude oil operating capacity per day. That represents nearly 6.5% of capacity nationwide.

At the same time, the Texas City area refineries reported emitting 118,558 pounds of cancer-causing benzene in 2012 while the Port Arthur refineries reported emitting 44,093 pounds of benzene in the same year<sup>ii</sup>.

Fence line communities across Texas and the nation, such as here in Galena Park, face the disadvantage of the health risks associated with refinery emissions. These clean air standards are essential to protect their health.

### **Seize the Moment on Environmental Justice**

Administrator McCarthy has made a steadfast commitment to pursuing EPA action on environmental justice. Strengthening and finalizing this refinery rule proposal is a tremendous opportunity to take action on that commitment and advance the agency's dedication to improve the health and environment of overburdened communities.

EPA's own demographic analysis conducted for the rulemaking shows that more than half of those most at risk from refinery pollution are racial and ethnic minorities. The analysis also notes that people of lower incomes are over represented in communities near refineries compared to the national average.

The health risks associated with refinery pollution are an environmental injustice and these communities have needed further environmental protections for many years. This proposal is an opportunity for EPA to seize the moment on environmental justice and afford fence line families the health protections they deserve.

We look forward to EPA finalizing strong health-protective standards in the coming months.

EDF will be submitting further technical comments on the proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here on the front lines of the environmental and public health concerns.

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration. 2014 Refinery Capacity Data downloaded at <<http://www.eia.gov/petroleum/refinerycapacity/refcap14.xls>>

<sup>ii</sup> EPA. TRI Explorer. Accessed July 17, 2014. <[http://iaspub.epa.gov/triexplorer/tri\\_release.chemical](http://iaspub.epa.gov/triexplorer/tri_release.chemical)>