

Children's Environmental Rights

- WHEREAS, The commitment to the protection of children's health and well-being is a fundamental priority of the PTA; we acknowledge the need to address air and water quality issues to mitigate the health risks posed to our state's children^{1,2}; and
- WHEREAS, Children's health is important to their development and well-being; environmental pollution, particularly air and water pollution, poses significant risks to children's health, leading to illnesses and potential long-term issues^{3,4}; and
- WHEREAS, Environmental preservation aligns with the protection of children's rights, ensuring they are shielded from potential harm arising from environmental degradation^{5,6}; and
- WHEREAS, Scientific research has established a clear link between environmental pollutants and negative health outcomes in children beginning as early as perinatal development^{7,8,9}; and
- WHEREAS, Governments and organizations worldwide have recognized the importance of environmental protection and its direct impact on public health^{10,11}; and
- WHEREAS, Children are more vulnerable to air pollution as they inhale a larger volume of pollutants relative to their body weight compared to adults, and Utah currently ranks within the top 25 states experiencing elevated levels of air pollution^{12,13,14,14,15}; and
- WHEREAS, The availability of clean and safe water is an essential element of children's health; and, the conservation of water resources is vital to ensure an enduring supply of fresh water for current and future generations, thereby contributing to children's well-being^{16,17}; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That Utah PTA calls on governments at all levels to enact and enforce policies and regulations aimed at reducing air and water pollution, with a specific focus on areas where children are most vulnerable, such as schools and residential areas; be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA recognizes the critical role that local governments, businesses and individuals play in preserving the environment and safeguarding the health of our communities, and supports the creation of policies and programs that provide incentives to support environmental initiatives; be it further

- Resolved, That Utah PTA encourages the creation and adoption of sustainable and environmentally-safe policies regarding practices in industries and agriculture to reduce pollution and promote clean air and water; be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA advocate for increased public awareness and education about the impact of environmental pollution on children's health, empowering parents, and communities to take action; be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA calls on governments, organizations, and individuals to invest in cleaner technologies, renewable energy sources, and infrastructure improvements that will lead to a healthier environment for all of Utah's children; be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA collaborates with parents, students, and community partners to urge local, state, and national leaders to support research and adopt policies and legislation that encourages efficient water management and promote water conservation best practices in our communities, including educating children and their families about responsible water usage; and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA pledges to monitor and assess progress in achieving these goals to ensure the well-being of future generations.

(Replaces HEA 2008-2 Idle Free Clean Air Zones and HEA 2009-2 Freeways Located Near Schools)

Documentation:

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3 Climate Change and Children's Health and Well-Being in the United States. (April 2023) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

<https://www.epa.gov/cira/climate-change-and-childrens-health-and-well-being-united-states->

Report

https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/CLiME_Final%20Report.pdf

4 Children's Environmental Health, (March 2024) National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

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5 Report to the Human Rights Council on the rights of children and the environment (2018), The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-environment/childrens-rights-and-environment>

6 Child Rights and the Environment – The Need For Action (2016) Human Rights Watch
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/22/child-rights-and-environment-need-action>

7 America's Children and the Environment, Third Edition (2011)
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America's Children and the Environment, Third Edition. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C., 2013.
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<https://www.who.int/news/item/29-10-2018-more-than-90-of-the-worlds-children-breathe-toxic-air-every-day#:~:text=Air%20pollution%20also%20impacts%20neurodevelopment,cardiovascular%20disease%20ater%20in%20life.>

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<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25807066/>

10 Children's environmental health, World Health Organization, (Date Accessed 2024 April 23)
https://www.who.int/health-topics/children-environmental-health#tab=tab_1

11 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child calls on states to take action in first guidance on children's rights and the environment, with a focus on climate change, (2023) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/un-committee-rights-child-calls-states-take-action-general-cmmment-26-childrens-rights-environment-cimate-change#>

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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5017593/>

13 Who is Most Affected by Outdoor Air Pollution? (2023) American Lung Association
<https://www.lung.org/clean-air/outdoors/who-is-at-risk/children-and-air-pollution#:~:text=Children%20face%20special%20risks%20from,air%20sacs%20develop%20after%20birth.>

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15 American Lung Association Report: Utah's Air Quality Gets Worse; 1 in 3 Nationwide Exposed to Unhealthy Air (2023) <https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/ut-sota-23>

16 Lead-Based Drinking Water Poses Danger (Date Accessed 2024 April 23) National Parent Teacher Association <https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/health/Safe-Drinking-Water>

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