

# It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air

Out of all the problems in Cumberland County, I am only focusing on one of them-clean air. Clean air is important to everyone and everything because people breathe air and they do not want to breathe dirty air. Clean air is way better than dirty air because clean air does not hurt people when they breathe it in. Dirty air is bad because when you inhale it you are putting yourself in danger by inhaling pollutants, which causes people to cough. For some people it is even more harmful. It is more harmful to the people with asthma, older people and you children.

Pollutants are what make the air unclean. One of the pollutants that make up most of the pollution in our county is ozone. Ozone can be good or bad. Ozone is good when it is far away from the earth because it helps protect us from the sun's hot rays. Ozone is bad when it is close to the earth in our atmosphere and when we can breathe it. When you breathe in ozone, it is very bad on you lungs. It can make the lungs' airways red and swollen. This can make you cough, make it harder for you to breath, or even make taking a breath hurt. You cannot see ozone. Some people call bad ozone "smog." Smog is made when cars, buses, and factories give off chemicals that are cooked by the sun. Since you cannot see ozone, you can watch the news to see what the AQI is, which tells what the ozone level is in you area. AQI stands for Air Quality Index. The AQI ranges from green, which is good, to maroon, which is hazardous. Most of the time the ozone is our area is green, yellow, or sometimes orange. Ozone is usually a problem in the summer time, and if the level is high, you don't need to play outside a whole lot.

The other pollutant that makes up most of the pollution in our country is particulate matter. Particulate matter is made up of particles in the air that come from soot and dust. People that burn anything make soot. These pollutants can make people cough and have problems breathing also. You can see dust and soot in the air. They make the air look cloudy or hazy.

Clean air is important to everyone, especially kids like me. Children are affected more by dirty air. While pollutants are caused by things such as cars, factories, and buses. I can probably form a group that wants to help do things to lower pollution. We can walk or ride our bikes to our friend's house instead of asking our moms to take us in the car. I can ask me mom to stop making trips that she doesn't need to make. I can also ask my mom and dad to help by keeping their cars in good shape, by filling up early or late in the day, or by riding with other people when they can. When I am an adult, I will be able to do things that I have to ask my parents to do, so that my children will have clean air to breathe without coughing. But until I grow up, I will just have to do the little things and depend on the adults in my city to do the big things. All of us need to chip in to help get cleaner air. Everyone in this community deserves to breathe clean air. That is why we all need cleaner air to breath!

## **Erica Norman**

4<sup>th</sup> grader, William H. Owen

Grand prizewinner of \$100 for "It all adds up to clean air" essay contest

Sponsor by: FAMPO (Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization)

