

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

**MEMORANDUM**

**July 25, 2022**

**To: Members of the Subcommittee on Environment**

**Fr: Subcommittee Staff**

**Re: Hearing on “Toxic Air: How Leaded Aviation Fuel Is Poisoning America’s Children”**

On **Thursday July 28, at 2:00 p.m. ET**, the Subcommittee on Environment will hold a hybrid hearing **in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and on the Zoom video platform**. The hearing will examine the health impacts of leaded aviation fuel and the pathways to increasing availability and adoption of unleaded alternatives.

**I. HEARING PURPOSE**

The hearing will give Members an opportunity to learn about the health impacts of leaded aviation fuel, or Avgas. Avgas is used by piston-engine aircrafts and remains the last leaded transportation fuel in the United States, accounting for 70% of lead air pollution nationwide.<sup>1</sup> Today, there are 20,000 general aviation airports where piston-engine aircraft operate, and around 16 million people and 3 million children live within one kilometer of an airport facility in the United States using Avgas.<sup>2</sup> The impacts of Avgas fall hardest on communities surrounding these airports, as well as on workers who service them.<sup>3</sup> Lead—including airborne lead—is highly toxic, causing a variety of adverse health effects, even at low doses, including brain damage, learning and behavior problems, lower IQ levels, and increased blood pressure.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> EPA to Review Rules for Largest Source of Lead in Air, E&E News (Jan. 12, 2022) (online at [www.eenews.net/articles/epa-to-review-rules-for-largest-source-of-lead-in-air/](http://www.eenews.net/articles/epa-to-review-rules-for-largest-source-of-lead-in-air/)).

<sup>2</sup> Zahran, S., Iverson, T., McElmurry, S. P., and Weiler, S., *The Effect of Leaded Aviation Gasoline on Blood Lead in Children*, Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, (2017) (online at <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/691686>).

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, *National Analysis of the Populations Residing Near or Attending School Near U.S. Airports* (Feb. 2020) (online at <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100YG4A.pdf>).

<sup>4</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, *Lead: Protect Your Children* (online at [www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-children](http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-children)) (accessed on Jul. 24, 2022); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Childhood Lead Poisoning*

Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agree that there is no safe level of lead exposure for children.<sup>5</sup>

## II. WITNESSES

**Marciela Lechuga**

Resident  
Reid-Hillview Airport Buffer Zone

**Cindy Chavez**

Supervisor  
County of Santa Clara (California)

**Bruce Lanphear**

Professor, Health Sciences  
Simon Fraser University

*Additional witnesses to be announced.*

Staff contacts: Katie Thomas, Aria Kovalovich, and Kevin Fox at (202) 225-5051.

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*Prevention: Health Effects of Lead Exposure* (online at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm)) (accessed on Jul. 24, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, *Lead: Protect Your Children* (online at [www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-children](http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-children)); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention: Health Effects of Lead Exposure* (online at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm)) (accessed on Jul. 24, 2022).