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Contact: Cathy Bacile Cunningham, (517) 333-1606, cbacile@byrumfisk.com

MI League of Women Voters Kicks Off Clean Air Promise Campaign to Protect Children, Public Health

Campaign urges leaders, residents to make the Clean Air Promise

KALAMAZOO – The Michigan League of Women Voters today officially kicked off its Clean Air Promise Campaign, an effort to mobilize Michigan leaders and residents to support policies that protect residents, and especially children, from the dangers of pollution.

“This summer, we are setting a clear goal: protect our children and our families from dangerous air pollution,” said **Suzanne Dixon**, the natural resources director for the Michigan League of Women Voters. “We believe that every child has the right to be born and grow up without suffering from the devastating effects that toxic pollution causes and worsens such as respiratory disease, higher cancer risks, and learning and developmental disorders. And we believe every family has the right to breathe clean air, free of the elevated heart and lung disease risks that air pollution poses.”

The Clean Air Promise Campaign aims to increase awareness about the negative effects of pollution on children. In Michigan, 225,007 children and 744,025 adults suffer from asthma, which can be exacerbated by pollution – especially during the hot days of summer. Scientific research shows that children and older Americans are more likely to develop respiratory or cardiac conditions when exposed to air pollution. In addition, women of childbearing age who are routinely exposed to mercury may end up with enough in their bodies to put a developing baby at risk.

“Protecting my unborn child is what I think about when I go to sleep at night and when I wake up every morning, but I alone can’t protect my baby from toxic pollution,” said **Beth Wallace**, who is expecting her first child. “I urge everyone to make the Clean Air Promise and to join us as we organize around the simple concept of protecting our children and our families from dangerous air pollution. Our neighbors and our leaders at the community, state and federal level can all join the effort by making the Clean Air Promise. Together, we can make a difference.”

The dangers of air pollution are clear. A recent study by the Clean Air Task Force estimated that in 2010, power plant pollution alone was responsible for 688 deaths, 12,179 asthma attacks, and 1,114 non-fatal heart attacks in Michigan. Additionally, 841 Michigan residents went to the

emergency room because of an asthma attack caused by power plant pollution, and 329 people with cardiac symptoms caused by power plant pollution were hospitalized.

The Clean Air Promise simply says: *I promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution. Because toxics and pollutants such as mercury, smog, carbon, and soot, cause thousands of hospital visits, asthma attacks, and even deaths. I will support clean air policies and other protections that scientists and public health experts have recommended to the EPA to safeguard our air quality.*

The Clean Air Promise Campaign was launched by the League of Women Voters along with health and environmental groups on July 26. To learn more about the Clean Air Promise, visit www.peoplenotpolluters.org.

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