

PRESS RELEASE

UTAH BUSINESSES CALL FOR URGENT STATE ACTION TO ADDRESS BAD AIR

Jon Rockefeller
jrockefeller@petzl.com
801-903-0230

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[SALT LAKE CITY]

Today, 30 businesses released a letter addressed to Governor Herbert and key state officials urging them to include strong and ambitious pollution-cutting measures in a critical state plan due later this year. The group represents small and large local businesses from a wide array of sectors -- from the outdoor industry and real-estate brokers to car dealerships and architectural firms.

After failing federal air quality standards for fine particle pollution (PM2.5) for nearly a decade, Utah regulators now have less than six months to submit a new plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency get us back on track.

The letter, addressed to the Governor, the Division of Air Quality, and the Air Quality Board, calls for “a wide array of strong and ambitious proposals” as state officials develop this important plan to finally protect the health of Utah’s families.

These local businesses, from Petzl, to Ancestry, to Garbett Homes, to Zions Bank, have united to call for stronger and more immediate action from the Herbert Administration, as it develops the so-called “Serious State Implementation Plan” for PM2.5 (aka the “Serious SIP”).

“The Serious SIP offers an incredibly important opportunity to consider and implement innovative strategies that reduce emissions while ensuring communities and businesses thrive,” the letter highlighted.

For over eight years, the Salt Lake City, Logan, and Provo areas have failed federal Clean Air Act standards for PM2.5. Because our air still jeopardizes the health of our families and communities, the EPA now requires the state to develop a more stringent plan to address this pollution. PM2.5 is the primary pollutant that builds up during wintertime inversions, causing health issues for sensitive groups such as those with lung diseases, asthma, and bronchitis, and increasing the risk of heart attacks and stroke.

The 30 local companies highlight the importance of clean air and a healthy environment in the communities where they do business. These are the same communities in which their employees want to safely live, work, and play.

“KÜHL has succeeded in part because of the healthy lifestyle afforded to our employees who live along the Wasatch Front. When toxic air forces our employees indoors and threatens the health of children, expectant mothers and the elderly in our communities, it’s time to take a stand,” said Kevin Boyle, founder and president of KÜHL. “We are very disappointed that the State of Utah has not met air quality standards in the U.S. for the last 8+ years. KÜHL encourages our State and elected officials to show leadership and do what it takes to clean up our air - and to do it now.”

The Serious SIP process is different and more stringent than earlier plans developed by state agencies. It requires officials to look at all strategies adopted in *any* other state that have helped to reduce emissions. If they reject those, they must explain why they would not be effective in Utah.

The recommendations highlighted by the business group focus on measures to limit the hazards of wood smoke through increased public education and enforcement, and limiting emissions from heavy duty and non-road trucks, buses, and equipment that would improve air quality for decades to come.

John Miller, Assistant General Manager of Mark Miller Toyota, highlights the need for the state to do all that it can for air quality. “As a family-owned car dealership, we recognize that our products impact air quality. Tier 3 fuels will help to reduce this impact, and we look forward to supporting this new technology. However, Tier 3 fuels are just one of many emissions reduction strategies that the State should be considering. We can’t afford to leave any potential strategies on the table, as the health of our employees and their families is too important.”

“As a growing Salt Lake City-based business, it is crucial for us to operate in a state that supports air quality for both human and environmental health,” said Lindsey Elliott, co-founder of Wylder Goods. “The poor air quality here impacts our ability to recruit and retain employees, and also affects personal health and recreation company-wide. If Utah wants to support innovation and draw new businesses to the state, it must consider the full range of options that exist to address air quality to make Utah more appealing.”