

The Register-Guard

Opinion

What are we breathing?

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Do you wonder how polluted is the air you breathe? My 4-year old grandson has asthma and he's having terrible trouble breathing these past two months. According to air quality data published by the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency, Eugene's air was healthy to breathe only one out of three days between November and mid-December.

During an additional 10% of days, local air was rated as "unhealthy." The other 60% of the time, air quality was "moderate," which may still pose health concerns for some people.

Industrial polluters significantly impact local air quality. Beyond Toxics recently completed over 300 health surveys in West Eugene neighborhoods; the vast majority of the people smell polluted air and feel its impacts regularly.

You can help protect the quality of our air by attending upcoming public hearings to review air pollution permits for Seneca Sawmill, Seneca Sustainable Energy, and additional facilities emitting pollutants linked to cancer, asthma, and other diseases.

New air quality laws adopted in Oregon require that industrial facilities are held accountable for reducing hazardous air pollution. We all need to speak up to make sure public health is the top priority when regulating industrial air polluters.

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