

# THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

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## **CLEANER AIR CAN STRENGTHEN ECONOMY**

### **Google, Pittsburgh Tech Council Endorse Breathe Project Goal: Cleaner Air For Healthier Residents and Healthier Economy**

*Nearly \$1 million in fund helping contractors on city projects meet new air emissions regulations opens for applicants Jan. 1*

**Pittsburgh, Nov. 30, 2011** – Leaders of Pittsburgh’s emerging technology economy, its traditional bricks-and-mortar economy and local government joined together today to endorse the Breathe Project goal of taking Pittsburgh from the ranks of the country’s worst-air regions to the ranks of the best.

Each member of the group – Andrew Moore, head of Google’s Pittsburgh office; Brian Kennedy, vice president for government and external relations at the Pittsburgh Technology Council; City Councilman Bill Peduto, Allegheny County Air Management and contractor representatives who all worked together in developing construction equipment retrofit legislation – said claims that an ambitious air clean-up plan will cost jobs and hurt the region’s economy do not hold up against their experience.

“Securing a strong economic future for the region actually requires a healthy environment, and that begins with clean air and water,” said Moore, vice president, engineering for Google and the site director for its Pittsburgh office. “If we can’t offer those essentials to employees we need to recruit to fill the jobs of the future, then we will lose them to those cities that do.”

Moore and the others participating in today’s press conference also endorsed the big-tent approach of the Breathe Project, which now includes a coalition of nearly 50 organizations across the spectrum of business, civic life, environmental stewardship and government that have committed to developing solutions to the region’s significant air quality problem without overburdening the regional economy’s traditional or emerging job sectors.

Demonstrating the potential for how regional partnerships can lead to a win-win for improved air quality and a stronger economy, the group announced that applications will begin being taken Jan. 1, 2012 for contractors on city government-connected projects for assistance from the Clean Diesel Construction Equipment Retrofit Fund. The fund was started through the Allegheny County Health Department to assist contractors on county government-connected projects to retrofit their equipment to reduce harmful emissions. Nearly \$1 million has been added to it by The Heinz Endowments to help small construction company owners meet new emissions reduction regulations passed by City Council in July.

“This is just one step along the way to cleaner air but it is an important step, since it has involved union leaders, small business owners, government officials and the foundation community coming together to develop a solution that protects jobs and gets us closer to the clean air we need to have,” said Bill Peduto, the third-term City Councilman from the 8<sup>th</sup> District who sponsored the legislation. “The regulations are now in force, the fund is open for business and the entire effort is a model for how to work across sectors to make progress.”

The new regulations require contractors to use low-emissions construction equipment and related vehicles on projects that total \$2.5 million or more and that involve at least \$250,000 in city subsidies. Also approved in July was a companion requirement that all vehicles in the city government fleet have emission-control devices by 2021. An analysis of Pittsburgh’s air quality commissioned by the Endowments last year found that at least half of the region’s pollution problem comes from sources inside the region. Another federal Environmental Protection Agency study estimates that about 25 percent of the county’s diesel particulate pollution is generated by diesel construction vehicles, and that retrofits can eliminate as much as 90 percent of those emissions.

The new public policies coupled with innovative strategies and monetary assistance from the private sector to ensure compliance are in keeping with the strategies of the Breathe Project Coalition, which ranges from the Allegheny Conference on Community Development to the Group Against Smog and Pollution to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s Western Pennsylvania Chapter. The organizations have been joined by hundreds of individuals across the region who have pledged to make personal behavioral changes that will lead to air quality improvement.

The multi-million dollar research, public awareness and action campaign was launched by The Heinz Endowments after more than a year of research into the region’s air problems. The project’s goal is to make significant reductions in the harmful invisible pollutants that threaten human health and degrade other aspects of the environment.

“In the late 1940s, it was Richard King Mellon representing the business community and Mayor David Lawrence representing government who came together and spurred other sectors to take meaningful action in the first effort to clean the air of visible pollution,” Heinz Endowments President Robert Vagt said in convening the press conference. “They knew that no matter how prosperous Pittsburgh was at the time, the future of the region’s economy, the health of its residents and the image it presented to the world depended on cleaner air. They were able to achieve the goals that were set out, and now, more than 60 years later, a similar coalition is

determined to do the same for invisible pollutants, which are in many ways more harmful to human health.”

Brian Kennedy, vice president for government and external relations at the Pittsburgh Technology Council called the formation of a broad-based coalition to remove Pittsburgh from the country’s worst-air cities lists, an essential step to protect the health of the region’s workforce in the current economy and attract new workers who will be needed to fill demanding jobs in the emerging technology economy.

“We at the Tech Council engage not only with start-up companies but also with those that have established themselves and are growing,” said Kennedy. “We want them to have every reason to remain here and quality of life is a key determiner. If a company cannot begin with a baseline of clean air and water, then the amenities we offer as incentives will not matter.”

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