

The Link to the EPA Final Endangerment Finding on Leaded Aviation Gas is available here:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-10-20/pdf/2023-23247.pdf>

<https://earthjustice.org/press/2023/epa-issues-endangerment-finding-for-leaded-aviation-gas>

October 18, 2023

EPA Issues Endangerment Finding for Leaded Aviation Gas

Final endangerment finding marks crucial progress in protecting public health

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Washington, D.C. —

Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [released a finalized endangerment finding](#) for lead in aviation gasoline used by piston-engine aircraft, a major move forward to protect communities from the largest source of lead emissions in the country's air. This critical step means EPA must issue emission standards for lead pollution from these aircraft and work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on aircraft engine emissions standards.

The endangerment finding comes in response to a [petition filed in 2021](#) by community groups represented by Earthjustice, in collaboration with the County of Santa Clara, California, and the Town of Middleton, Wisconsin.

“We commend EPA for finalizing the endangerment finding and moving forward with addressing the country's largest source of airborne lead emissions,” said **Kelly Lester, Earthjustice attorney**. “We know that any amount of lead is harmful and that even low levels of lead cause irreversible damage to children and serious health problems, like cardiovascular disease, in adults. Every day of delay means more people, including hundreds of thousands of children, are exposed to this dangerous chemical. EPA and the FAA must work together quickly to eliminate this source of lead emissions.”

While EPA is making progress on eliminating the use of leaded avgas, Congress is working on a new five-year reauthorization of the FAA that [includes a provision that would make it next to impossible](#) for many general aviation airports to transition away from leaded aviation gasoline, also known as avgas. [Nearly 100 community groups and organizations have called on Congress](#) to remove this bad provision and instead speed up the transition away from leaded avgas.

Leaded gasoline in motor vehicles was banned nearly 25 years ago, yet the use of leaded avgas persists in approximately 170,000 piston-engine aircraft spread across some 20,000 airports nationwide. Emissions from these aircraft are responsible for about 70% of lead released into the atmosphere.

Over 5 million people, including more than 360,000 children under the age of five, reside near at least one of the airports where piston-engine aircraft operate, [according to EPA](#). Multiple studies have confirmed that children living in proximity to airports have higher levels of lead in their blood than their peers who live further away. A [comprehensive review of lead pollution data conducted by Earthjustice](#) has revealed that airports with the highest lead emissions are concentrated in a handful of states, including California, Florida, Arizona, Washington, and Colorado. Most general aviation airports with the highest lead emissions are located in communities of color.

Earthjustice represented Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Center for Environmental Health, Friends of the Earth, Montgomery-Gibbs Environmental Coalition, and Oregon Aviation Watch in connection with the 2021 petition.



Leaded gas used in small airplanes is commonly referred to as “avgas.” It is the single largest source of lead emissions in the country. (Darryl Brooks / Shutterstock)

