



The Tyranny of Good Intentions

How Federal Air Quality Regulation Harms Americans

Joel Schwartz

Visiting Fellow

American Enterprise Institute

Presented at the

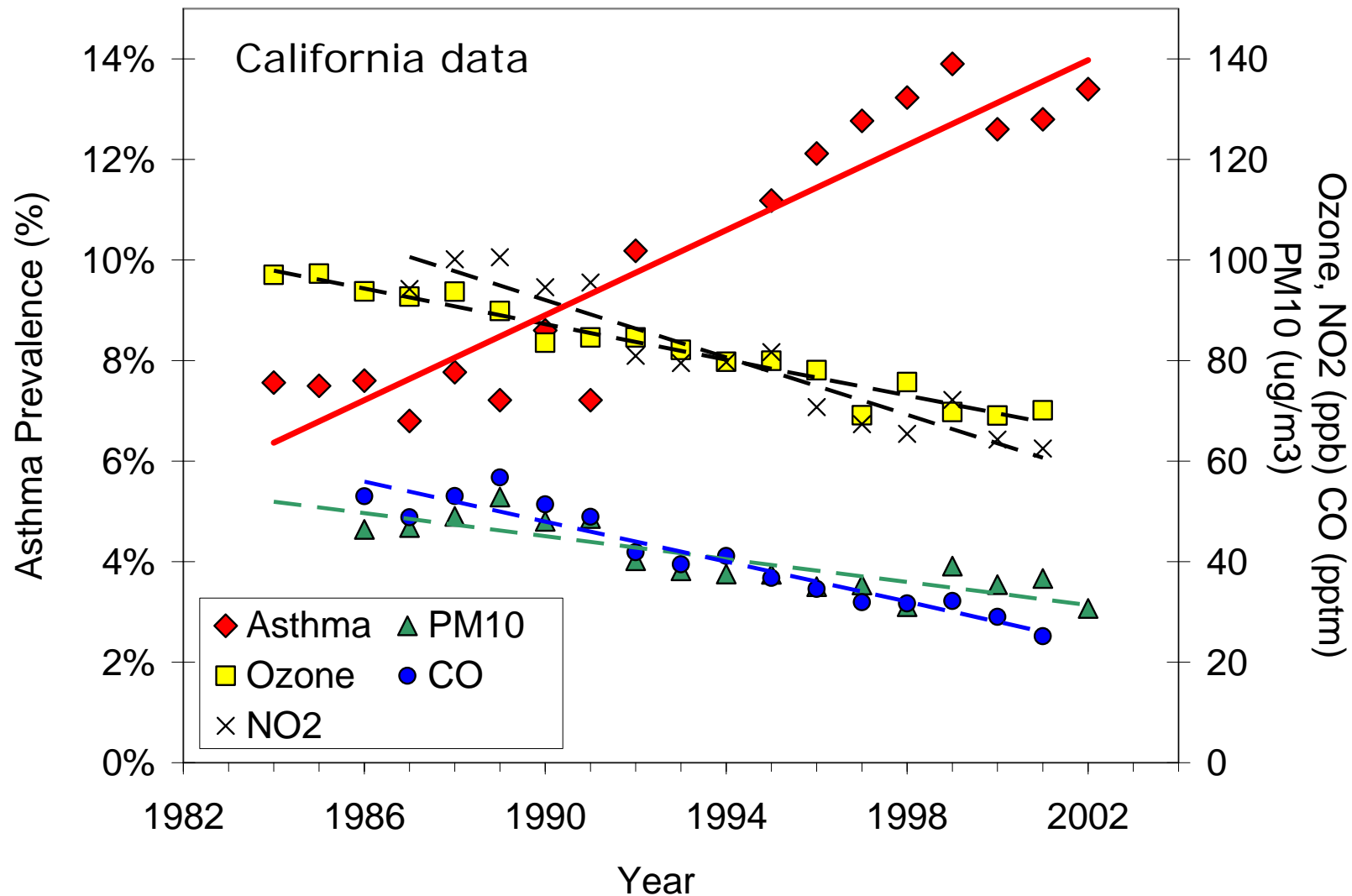
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EPA: Expanding the Reach of the Clean Air Act

- EPA recently tightened the standard for fine particulate matter
 - Will go from 15% to 25% of metro areas in “non-attainment”
- EPA will propose a new ozone standard in March 2007
 - Least stringent alternative would double metro areas in non-attainment from 1/3 to 2/3.
 - Most stringent alternative would make virtually the entire country a non-attainment area.
- Must act now. Once new standard is proposed, it will be nearly impossible to stop.

Declining Air Pollution, Rising Asthma

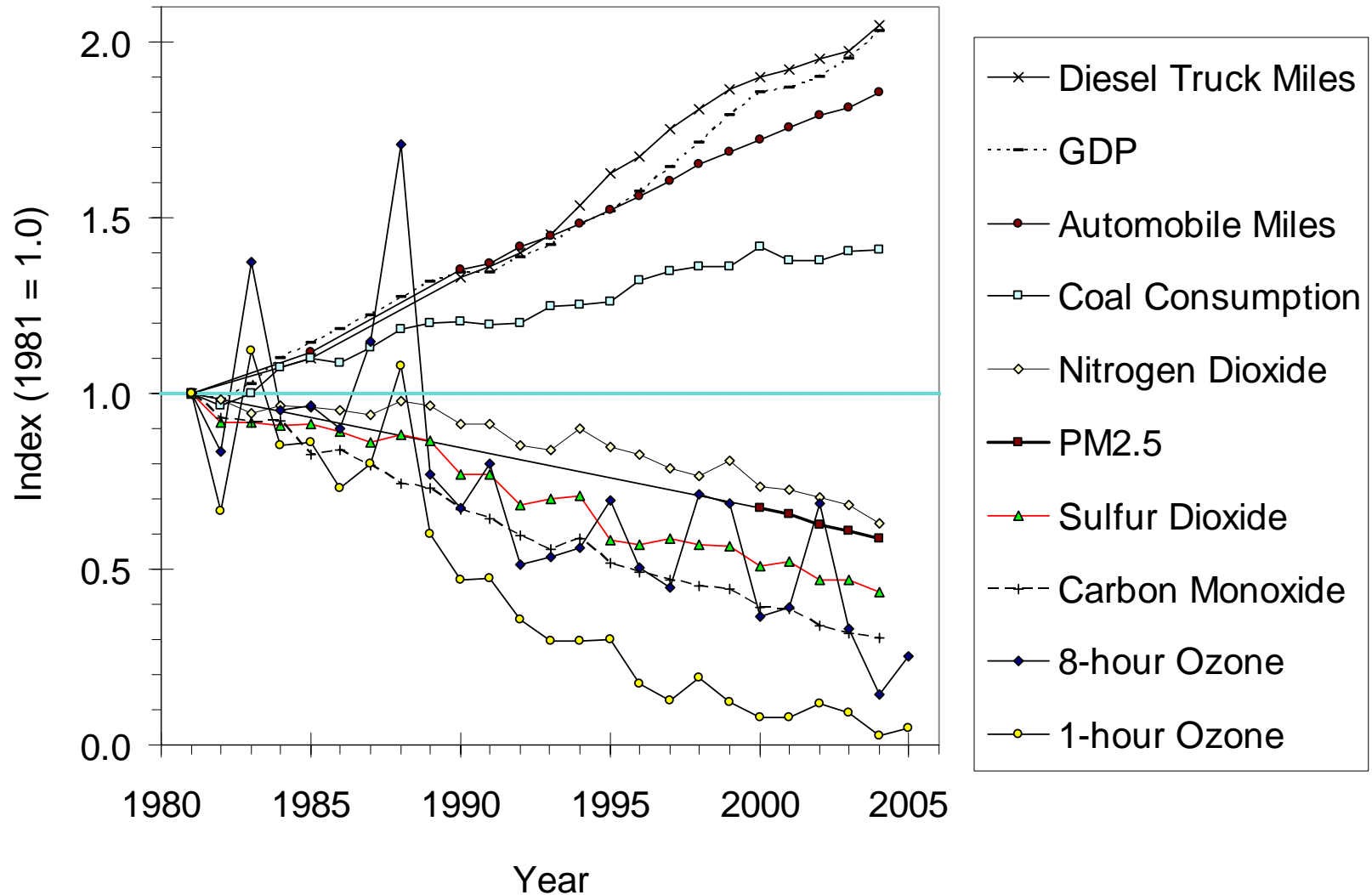


Scientists, Regulators Fabricate Appearance of Serious Harm

- Children's Health Study (CHS): Funded by California Air Resources Board; performed by USC Scientists
- Press conference claims by USC scientists & CARB staff (February 2002):
 - 3 times greater asthma risk in high-ozone communities for children who played 3 or more team sports (8% of children)
 - Results relevant for ozone levels all over country
- Reality:
 - Didn't mention that asthma risk was 30% *lower* overall in the high-ozone communities, and that other air pollutants were also associated with lower asthma risk
 - No area of U.S. has *ever* had ozone levels as high as CHS high-ozone communities
 - By the time the study was released, it didn't even apply to the communities where it was performed

More Driving, More Energy...Less Pollution

National-average air pollution levels, 1981-2005



Less Air Pollution...More Alarmism

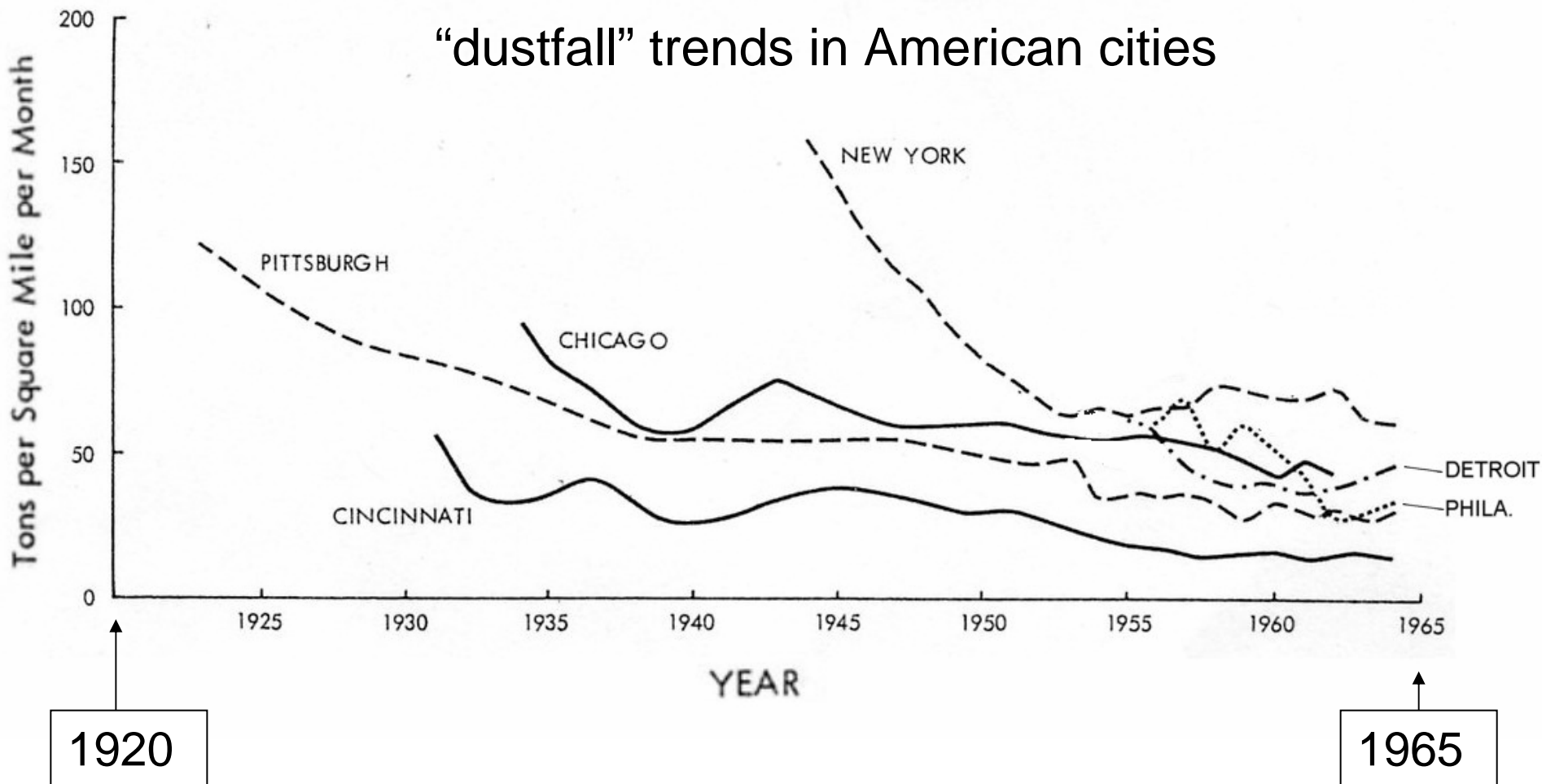
Activists and journalists create false appearance of worsening air pollution

- “Smog is out of control in almost all of our major cities,” Sierra Club, *Clearing the Air with Transit Spending*, 2001
- “The Clean Air Act Is Seriously at Risk”
American Lung Association, *State of the Air 2004*
- “Sprawl and higher-emitting SUVs are proliferating faster than technological fixes can keep up.” Smart-Growth America, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 9/1/2003
- “It might be a good idea to breathe now, while you still can,” Paul Krugman, *New York Times*, 11/26/2002
- “Millions of people, of all ages and backgrounds, live in places where pollution in the air makes it difficult, even dangerous to breathe.” American Lung Association, *State of the Air 2005*

False information makes public perception the opposite of reality.

Pollution Was Declining Long Before the Clean Air Act

“dustfall” trends in American cities



Americans began reducing air pollution in their communities long before the feds nationalized air pollution policy

Collateral Damage from Clean Air Act

- Hijack air law to advance other agendas
 - Ethanol transfers cash from motorists to agribusinesses.
 - Advance anti-auto/anti-suburb agenda under guise of air quality regulation
- Mainly about process, rather than results
 - Huge administrative burdens increase costs without improving air quality
- Favors unnecessarily expensive, ineffective, and/or counterproductive measures
 - New Source Review: discourages pollution reduction, harms consumers by reducing competition.
 - Vehicle inspections: ineffective, but protected by interest groups
 - Ethanol: worsens ozone, raises gasoline prices.

Creation of regulatory bureaucracies with interests at odds with the interests of the people they are supposedly protecting

- Air quality was the justification for the creation of regional planning agencies that exist largely to implement national anti-mobility, anti-suburb policies
- Some regional transportation plans have the explicit goal of increasing road congestion in order to discourage automobile use and encourage use of public transit
- The Clean Air Act created a national planning regime intended to work against Americans' travel and lifestyle preferences

Biggest problem of all: No stopping point

- Clean Air Act gives federal and state environmental bureaucracies the power to keep expanding their power.
- Regulators depend on having a serious problem to solve. But those same regulators decide when their job is finished. Naturally, it never will be.
- EPA also evaluates the success of its own regulatory programs
 - EPA is a like a company that gets to decide how much of its products consumers must buy, and to audit its own books.
- Regulators are major funders of the health research used to justify the need for more regulation.
- Regulators provide millions of dollars per year to environmental groups who then lobby for more regulations and foment public fear of environmental harms.

What can be done?

- We're well beyond the point of diminishing returns on air pollution reduction; yet regulatory costs keep increasing and there's no end in sight.
- Short term: prevent adoption of tougher ozone standard. Important to act before standard is proposed
 - Raise awareness of state and local elected officials and grass roots activists
 - Make your voice heard with EPA, Bush administration, and Congress.
- Long term: Change political environment to remove Clean Air Act incentives for bureaucratic expansion and manufacturing of phantom risks

www.aei.org

www.joelschwartz.com

joel@joelschwartz.com