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clean air for all  
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**now!**

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 8

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If you need to reach us on a more urgent basis, call  
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or

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## **Production of Computer Chips in United States: The U.S. CHIPS Act**

The U.S. CHIPS Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on August 9, 2022. Its purpose is to boost production of the most sophisticated computer chips on United States soil. This is critical to the Nation's economy and security, especially given the threat China poses to Taiwan where the vast majority of the most sophisticated chips are produced world-wide. Prior to the Act's passage, Intel had already committed \$3.5 billion to modify Intel New Mexico's plant to produce a new generation of chips. Intel also had committed \$20 billion to construct a new series of production facilities in Ohio and \$20 billion to expand operations in Arizona. (Construction at all these locations is underway.) The Intel Ohio investment, with help from the CHIPS Act, may grow to \$100 billion. In addition, Samsung (Taylor TX), Micron (Clay, NY), Texas Instruments (Lehi, UT), AMD (Austin, TX) and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (Phoenix, AZ) have recently built, are building or are planning to build large, multi-billion-dollar chip fabricating plants in the U.S.

Among many other elements, the U.S. CHIPS Act includes \$27 billion to create a Technology Accelerator to advance emissions-reducing technologies. The following is from a Facebook page called *Intel Megaproject* in which those living near the construction of the new Intel plant in Ohio share information.

"Intel recently announced the pricing of its inaugural green bond issuance totaling \$1.25 billion. The net proceeds of the green bond offering will be used to fund eligible projects in

six key areas that support Intel's sustainability goals, including green buildings, energy efficiency, circular economy and waste management, green-house gas emissions reductions, water stewardship, and renewable electricity."

While all this sounds good, neither the Federal government's investment nor Intel's green bond will deliver any improvements to emissions abatement for years to come, if at all. Meanwhile, today's technology and equipment would allow Intel New Mexico to substantially improve abatement of its toxic air emissions, primarily by employing equipment in tandem with existing thermal oxidizers and scrubbers to further treat its waste streams before venting to the atmosphere

## Intel's Air Emissions Permit

In prior communications, we reported that Intel's air emissions permit, issued by the New Mexico Environment Department, allows Intel to emit substantially more pollutants than they are currently releasing. As one example, Intel can release up to 96.5 tons per year of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). According to Intel's public website, Explore Intel, in the most recent quarter, the plant emitted 1.65 tons of VOCs, which on an annualized basis would equal 6.40 tons.

The State and EPA regulations allow Intel to increase those emissions, up to the allowable levels in the permit, without any regulatory action, oversight, or public notification. When CAFA-now! complained about this to the EPA Region VI Administrator, we received a letter in response which stated, among other things, that, "Those

[regulatory action, oversight, or public notification] are not legally required for this type of permit action." Thus, as we have stated previously, Intel New Mexico can increase its emissions at will and therefore is not motivated to keep them to an absolute minimum.

## UPDATE: Intel's New Production

Work continues on the remodeling of the northern portion of the Intel plant as evidenced by the plethora of cranes and shipping containers onsite. Intel had projected that the work would be completed by the end of 2022 or early 2023. Both those time frames have passed, and at present, no additional information is available.

We do know when the new production begins, the plant's toxic air emissions will increase. By how much is anyone's guess, and so far, Intel staff are either unwilling or unable to say by how much.

CAFA-now!'s position is that Intel New Mexico should seek to reduce pollution emission levels to absolute minimums rather than just complying with inadequate EPA and New Mexico Environment Department guidelines.

## EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards and Human Health

Continuous exposure to low levels of air pollution poses risk to human health and shortens life spans. Recent medical and scientific research has demonstrated that pollution levels once thought to be "safe" actually pose risks to human health and

longevity. EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards, which we are told define "safe levels" of air pollution, are inadequate and do not protect human health. The World Health Organization (WHO) is calling for developed nations' environmental regulatory organizations to rethink their allowable levels of pollution and reduce them substantially. For example, WHO recommends that annual exposure to PM (Particulate Matter) 2.5 (microns) be set at 5 micrograms per cubic meter. Currently, EPA's standard is 12 micrograms per cubic meter. Just recently, EPA proposed a draft rule to lower it to 11. Environmentalists and scientists already have criticized this proposal as inadequate.

## Cancer Study

The latest on the long-awaited report of the study of cancer rates in the vicinity of the Intel New Mexico plant is that preliminary results were shared with a limited audience at the May 24, 2023 meeting of the Community Environmental Working Group so that the study author could receive feedback before finalizing the report. At a later date, the final report will be presented to a community-wide audience. CAFA-now! has pressed the Director of the New Mexico Tumor Registry for a confirmed date when the study will be made public, but so far no commitment is forthcoming.

## The Community Environmental Working Group (CEWG)

The CEWG was established in 2004 by Intel New Mexico at the behest of the EPA and the New Mexico Environment Department. CEWG advocates continuous

environmental improvements by Intel New Mexico, with a focus on reducing its chemical emissions. The Group also promotes constructive dialogue on all issues related to its mission. The Group has no formal control over Intel. Therefore, any improvements in emissions reduction are achieved by building upon the breadth and depth of information exchanged and the weight of evidence on the issues.

In 2022, the CEWG changed its structure from a member organization and now alternates monthly between public meetings and Steering Committee meetings. The Working Group's Steering Committee sets the agenda and guides the work. The Steering Committee includes longtime "green" activists, the Working Group's facilitator and a representative from Intel. Additional members may be added based on interest and commitment.

CAFA-now!'s position on the CEWG is that it provides a venue in which community members can interact with Intel representatives, hear updated information about the latest developments at the plant, ask questions and offer criticisms and complaints. It also presents opportunities for external experts and critics (such as representatives of CAFA-now!) to raise issues of concern from within nearby communities and to advocate for changes to address those concerns. Going forward, CAFA-now will make known to all members and to nearby communities upcoming CEWG meeting schedules and agendas. The meetings take place on Zoom and usually last no longer than 2 hours. We strongly encourage as many people as possible to attend.