Dear Shri Gaikwad

No more delay in formation of “Clean Air Committee” for Pune

This is to bring to your urgent notice the need for setting up a “Clean Air Committee” for Pune as mandated under Section 9.8 under the NCAP (National Clean Air Program) by the MoEF &CC in early 2019.

As you are aware, the air quality across India has been steadily deteriorating over the past few years and Pune is now categorized as a “non-attainment city” under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) wherein it fails to achieve the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). As per the mandate of the NCAP, the PMC has submitted a Pune Clean Air Action plan to the CPBC which has listed several actions to mitigate air pollution in the city.

To add to the health hazards that poor air quality gives rise to, a recent Harvard study¹ found that a small increase in long-term exposure to air pollution leads to a large increase in COVID-19 death rates. Another study from Italy² shows that the high death rates correlated with the areas with the highest levels of air pollution. This linkage between air pollution and COVID-19 mortality rates that is established reiterates the importance and urgency that needs to be given to mitigation of air pollution.

Pune being a hotbed for COVID-19, and air pollution being a contributor to COVID-19 deaths, the efforts need to be prompt and effective. Towards the objective of improving the air quality of Pune, we, a group of civil society organisations working on air quality and concerned citizens, propose that a “Clean Air Pune” committee be set up under your Chairmanship urgently. The committee would consist of multi-disciplinary stakeholders like government agencies including PMC, MPCB, RTO, MNGL, ARAI, IITM, health professionals, scientists and researchers, and civil society organisations working on air quality, and other members as deemed fit. Setting up this committee with a range of stakeholders on a priority will lead to taking well-informed and rounded decisions on what actions should be taken post-lockdown vis-à-vis keeping the air quality as close as possible to the improved one in the lockdown period. Cities like Nagpur and Nashik have already convened meetings under these Committees.

¹https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/covid-pm
We understand that you are in the midst of several issues regarding the pandemic, but we do hope that you appreciate the severity of the implication of air pollution regarding COVID-19 and request you to convene a meeting for this discussion at the earliest possible, so that right actions can be taken to protect lives.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,

Sujit Patwardhan
Trustee, Parisar

98220 26627
sujit@parisar.org

Address for Correspondence: Parisar, ‘Yamuna’, ICS Colony, Ganeshkhind Road, Pune 411007

We support the Demand for the urgent formation of the ‘Clean Air Committee’ for Pune:

1. Dr Sundeep Salvi (Pulmcare Research and Education (PURE) Foundation)
2. Nitya Ghotge (Anthra)
3. Dr Naresh Dadhich (ex-Director, IUCAA)
4. Ashish Kothari (Kalpavriksh)
5. Shruti Tambe (Sociology Dept. Pune University)
6. Prasanna Desai (Architect & Urban Planner)
7. Prashant Inamdar (Pedestrians First)
8. Ramesh Pandya (Director, Janwani)
9. Ajay Pathak (Ecological Society)
10. Anant Phadke (Lok VidyanSanghatana)
11. Gen SCN Jatar (Nagrik Chetna Manch)
12. Col B F Chaudhari (President, Nagrik Chetna Manch)
13. Sada Dumbre (ex Editor Saptahik Sakal)
14. Kiran Moghe (President, Pune Zilha Ghar Kamgar Sanghatana)
15. Hirabai Ghonnge (Akhil Bharatiya Janwadi Mahila Sanghatana - AIDWA)
16. Sanskriti Menon (Centre for Environment Education)
17. Youvraj Bagade (New Socialist Alternative)
18. Harshad Abhyankar (Save Pune Traffic Movement)
19. Satish Khot (National Society for Clean Cities)
20. Dr. Sidharth Dhende (ex Mayor, Pune)
21. Sarang Yadwadkar (Arch)
22. Dr Ritu Parchure (Prayas Health)
23. Dr Ravindra Sinha (Baner Pashan Link Road Welfare Trust)
24. Vaishali Patkar (Bhujal Abhiyan Trust)

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
CC: Shri. Murlidhar Mohol, Mayor, Pune
CC: Shri. Ajitdada Pawar, Guardian Minister, Pune
CC: Shri. Aditya Thackeray, Environment Minister, Maharashtra
CC: Shri. Sudhir Shrivastava, Chairman - MPCB
CC: Shri. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Chairman – CPCB

CC: Shri. Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change