Let's Make West Louisville Healthy for Citizens

By John Hans Gilderbloom Ph.D., Stephen A. Roosa Ph.D., William Riggs Ph.D., Carla Snyder MSL, Cary Lowe Ph.D., and Chad Frederick Ph.D

Industrial pollution is the major cause of West Louisville's health, housing, and economic problems. Sixty thousand people in West Louisville could be helped with stronger environmental regulation of nearby polluters. Our elected leaders have the tools and capability to improve the health of those living in West Louisville.

Compared to East Louisville, West Louisville has six times the amount of pollution (75,000 pounds). Residents of West Louisville are two to four times more likely to experience pollution-related illnesses. According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high blood pressure is twice as prevalent. Kidney disease, obesity, and physical and mental health issues occur at three times the rate. Diabetes, COPD, and strokes are more severe, affecting residents four times as often. These impacts extend to children and their education—nearly half of third graders in West Louisville score below proficiency standards on academic tests. Consequently, the average life expectancy of those living in West Louisville has grown to 16 years shorter. More trees and a new hospital can't address the excessive pollution.

The Gilderbloom research team is collecting data that might show that birth defects, autism, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and miscarriages are higher in neighborhoods with high pollution. Excessive levels of pollution not only affect health and housing in industrial neighborhoods, but also impact Earth's atmosphere, making Louisville one of the highest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases. For example, in their article in the *Courier Journal*, environmental writer James Bruggers and his colleague Phil McKenna estimate that just one

chemical plant out of the 45 in Louisville emits enough dangerous greenhouse gases to equal the pollution of 671,000 automobiles.

Studies conducted by the now shuttered Kentucky Institute for the Environment & Sustainable Development (KIESD) and Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) have identified climate change as a cause of rapidly multiplying problems in Kentucky and around the world: reduced life expectancies; record low proficiency scores; and unprecedented fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, heat waves, and flooding. Today the number 1 reason that 8 million people die prematurely is from unregulated pollution. Louisville ranks among the highest polluters in the country. Our cites that are becoming increasingly unlivable. This is all documented in John Hans Gilderbloom's just-released book, *Climate Chaos: Killing People, Places, and the Planet*, which describes how and why these unnecessary lives are lost around the world

While much of climate change research is centered on doom and gloom, John Hans Gilderbloom's latest book presents hope with practical commonsense solutions. Pollution prevention is a proven method for improving the health of West Louisville's 60,000 residents. A University of Louisville partnership between KIESD and a Louisville chemical company reduced cancer-causing pollutants by 90% after installing machinery to filter out dangerous air-borne toxins. The $3 million dollar demonstration project, funded by the company, represents a major breakthrough. It succeeded because of an amazing partnership among key university, governmental, and local business leaders.

Far too many preventable deaths occur each year in West Louisville. We must prioritize the well-being of the people over the interests of polluters who resist stringent environmental regulations for the sake of profit. It is the duty of science to advance knowledge and preserve it

for public consumption. Governmental, advocates, and business leaders must implement regulations and improvements that benefit our communities. Sadly, UofL's award winning environmental centers are no longer there and their research is no longer available on UofL websites Citizens need accessible knowledge to fight back these unnecessary deaths. Spending in West Louisville 67 million dollars on planting trees won't do it nor putting in a $90 million dollar hospital six miles from the downtown medical center are not the "cure" with premature deaths climbing higher. We need to understand that excessive pollution without regulation is the cause.

To learn more, visit John Hans Gilderbloom's website: sunlouisville.org. A docudrama inspired by Gilderbloom's latest book, *Climate Chaos: Killing People, Places, and the Planet*, is in production and will air in major movie theater in the Winter of 2027 followed to go on streaming and micro movies. (climateofhopefilm.org). All the authors contributed to the book. Dr. Stephen A. Roosa is Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Strategic Energy and Environmental Planning and his most recent book, Tracking the Transition From Fossil Fuels to Clean Energy; . Jeffrey Wigand is the highest-ranking former executive to break ranks with the tobacco industry in Louisville and his story was told in the movie, "The Insider".. William Riggs is a professor at the University of San Francisco School of Management. Carla Snyder is the executive producer of Climate of Hope and 90,000 feet. Cary Lowe is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Chad Frederick is a professor of urban geography and sustainable planning at Grand Valley State University. Both books are now available on Amazon and locally at Carmichaels.