

WASHINGTON, DC – US Rep. Mike Honda (D-San José), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), celebrated Earth Day today by telling the Bush Administration that its ongoing assault on the environment is harming children in many APIA communities.

“Unfortunately for the APIA community, the Bush Administration is doing the bidding of special interests by working to reverse decades of bipartisan progress on the environment,” Congressman Honda said. “By working to roll back such bipartisan landmarks as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Administration is jeopardizing APIA children whose health depends on those statutes.”

Honda noted that the Bush Administration’s push to weaken the Clean Air Act will let corporate polluters off the hook and expose more children to polluted air, contributing to the ongoing crisis of childhood asthma across the country. The American Lung Association has labeled the Bush Administration’s bill “the most harmful and unlawful air pollution initiative ever undertaken by the Federal Government.”

In addition, the Administration is proposing to delay controls on the emission of toxic mercury – despite the fact that 600,000 babies are born each year with significant levels of prenatal mercury exposure, which can cause damage to the brain and heart.

“The indigenous peoples of Hawaii, our Native Hawaiians, proud members of our country’s equally proud Asian and Pacific Islander community, believe in our obligation to “malama ‘aina”, to care for the land, to nurture and sustain it as a living, breathing being,” Congressman Ed Case (D-HI) said. “Earth Day is a time to reflect on these teachings, articulated in different ways by many peoples and cultures, but all adding up to our common obligation to preserve and protect our planet.”

“Our actions and decisions today will have an impact far into the future,” Congressman Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) said. “That’s why Earth Day is important – it reminds us that we’re linked together on this planet that we share with each other and generations to come.”

"As we celebrate the 35th anniversary of Earth Day we should take a moment to reflect on some of its accomplishments; our air is cleaner, our drinking water is safer, our rivers are no longer so polluted that they catch on fire," Congressman David Wu (D-OR) said. "As a nation we have much to be proud of, yet sadly, at a time of celebration, President Bush and Republicans in Congress are putting forward proposals that weaken standards of the Clean Air Act, and delay controls on toxic mercury emissions for more than a decade."

“Like so many communities across the country, APIAs face a skyrocketing rate of childhood asthma, as well as the dangers posed by widespread mercury contamination,” Congressman Honda added. “Earth Day is a reminder of the collective responsibility we all share to protect our children’s health and preserve the environment for generations to come.”

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*The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac> .*