



March 17, 2023

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
 Chair  
 House Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Interior, Environment, and Related  
 Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
 Ranking Member  
 House Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Interior, Environment, and Related  
 Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
 Chair  
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Interior, Environment, and Related  
 Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
 Ranking Member  
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Interior, Environment, and Related  
 Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Simpson, Chair Merkley, Ranking Members Pingree and Murkowski:

The undersigned health, medical and nursing organizations urge you to increase funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to \$12 billion in the fiscal year 2024 (FY24) Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. EPA programs save lives and safeguard health, including by improving air quality. From air monitoring networks to pollution standards, every action the agency takes has the potential to impact health. Our organizations call on you to ensure those impacts are positive, effective and widespread by adequately funding EPA.

Since the enactment of the Clean Air Act over 50 years ago, EPA has led the successful charge to ensure cleaner air and less pollution, but that work is not finished: health is still at risk from air pollution and other environmental hazards. The American Lung Association's "State of the Air" 2022 report found that more than 40% of Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of air pollution. We support robust funding for EPA's budget and the work the Agency does to deliver clean air. Within the Agency, there are a number of air-focused programs critical for public health that must receive more adequate investment. The programs included in this letter are not an exhaustive list but represent key priorities of the undersigned health groups.

**Clean Air Program**

The work conducted under the Clean Air program protects people from the impacts of air pollution, improves health and saves lives. This program assists states, Tribes and localities with

resources and support to help meet federal air quality standards and protect the health of their residents from dangerous air pollution. Activities like oversight and testing vehicles for emissions levels and mitigating any further worsening of air quality are also funded by this program. **Please provide at least \$915.5 million for EPA’s Clean Air Program.**

### **Categorical Grants for State, Local and Tribal Air Monitoring**

State, local and Tribal air agencies receive grants from EPA to help maintain their air monitoring networks. When this funding started, the intention was to fund a majority of participating air agency budgets. With time, however, this funding has failed to cover the costs of adequately maintaining and improving air monitors. This funding is crucial to informing the public on air quality risks to their health and in identifying areas that are most in need of pollution cleanup. The National Association of Clean Air Agencies and the National Tribal Air Association have maintained that in order to adequately operate the nation’s air quality monitoring networks, increases in federal funds are needed<sup>1</sup>. **Please provide \$500 million for State and Local Air Quality Management and \$57.4 million for Tribal Air Quality Management.**

### **Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program**

The Diesel Emissions Reduction (DERA) Grant program continues to be a cost-effective program that enjoys bipartisan support. According to EPA’s 2022 report to Congress, the health benefits of diesel emissions reduction projects are cost-effective, with monetized health benefits estimated to exceed federal funding by a factor of 10 to 1. Still, though, there are millions of dirty diesel engines that are polluting communities – particularly low-income areas and communities of color. **Please provide \$150 million for DERA grants.**

### **Radon Funding**

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, killing as many as 21,000 people a year. Radon is a radioactive, odorless gas that can seep into homes through cracks. The only way to know if you’ve got a radon problem is to test for it. The test is simple and relatively inexpensive but too many Americans never know they need to test for radon – often – in their homes. EPA’s radon program and the Categorical Grants for radon work in concert to protect people’s health from radon by educating the public on the dangers of radon and then funding states to do radon mitigation work. **Please provide \$5million for EPA’s radon program and \$18 million for State Indoor Radon Grants.**

### **Environmental Justice Enforcement**

Far too many communities are still waiting on the promise of clean air. The American Lung Association’s “State of the Air” 2022 report found that people of color are 3.6 times more likely than white people to live in areas with the unhealthiest air. Adequately funding EPA to hold polluters accountable to cleaning up the air in disadvantaged communities and to advance the

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Clean Air Agencies FY 2023 Funding One Pager October 2022  
<https://www.4cleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/NACAA-FY-2024-Grant-Recommendations-adopted.pdf>

protection of those overburdened by air pollution is necessary to meet those promises. **Please provide at least \$369.1 million for enforcing environmental justice commitments.**

EPA's work is critical in protecting health from poor air quality and addressing the sources of pollution. Appropriately funding the agency to complete this work is a responsibility we urge Congress to meet. Please support the President's budget request of \$12 billion in funding to EPA in Fiscal Year 2024.

Sincerely,

Climate Psychiatry Alliance

Allergy & Asthma Network

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Lung Association

American Thoracic Society

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Children's Environmental Health Network

Climate for Health

Health Care Without Harm

Medical Students for a Sustainable Future

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Environmental Health Association

National Hispanic Medical Association

National League for Nursing

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Public Health Institute