



November 2, 2023

Dear Representative:

The undersigned health organizations strongly oppose the proposed cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to the climate and health work undertaken by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that are included in the current FY2024 appropriations bills under consideration in the House. 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. The work done by CDC and HHS in preparing public health departments for the health impacts of climate change and addressing health inequities is also necessary to fully respond to the health emergency that is climate change.

The funding levels for EPA included in the House FY2024 bill is unacceptable. The bill cuts nearly 40% from the agency's budget, dramatically limiting the ability to protect health from air pollution and reversing course on achieving clean and healthy air for all. The bill would also eliminate programs that are designed to address the fact that some communities have borne the brunt of air pollution for far too long. Our groups strongly support environmental justice funding that would empower communities and work towards cleaning up the air in disadvantaged communities.

Furthermore, the bill includes damaging policy riders that would undercut EPA's ability to enforce rules that would reduce air pollution, protect health and save lives. National health and medical groups have united to call on EPA to strengthen pollution standards for cars and trucks, strengthen limits on methane from the oil and gas sector, limit mercury pollution from power plants, set and implement stronger national air pollution limits, and drive down carbon emissions that are accelerating the health impacts of climate change. All of these efforts would be seriously undermined under the House proposal.

We are also gravely concerned about reports that further cuts beyond those initially proposed in the House bill are under consideration. EPA's budget and workforce have remained stagnant for

the past ten fiscal years while the environmental challenges faced by communities continue to grow. Further budget reductions to an already underfunded agency would leave communities that are struggling with poor air quality and other environmental challenges at further risk.

In addition, we are deeply concerned with the House's proposed FY2024 Labor-HHS Education appropriations bill, which would eliminate funding for CDC's Climate and Health Program and would provide no funding for the HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity. CDC's Climate and Health Program helps communities across the country better prepare for and respond to the health impacts of extreme weather disasters. Excessive heat events, flooding, wildfires and more intense storms are all threatening the health of communities right now. Public health professionals are on the front lines of responding to the immediate aftermath of these threats and monitoring the lingering health impacts communities face. At HHS, the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity is recognizing that the health impacts of climate change have not been equally distributed and that those inequities require a whole of department approach to adequately address. Funding for both of these important efforts is eliminated in the House bill and we call on the House to reject this misguided proposal.

We strongly urge you to support robust funding for EPA, CDC and HHS and to oppose the inclusion of any damaging policy riders that prevent these important federal agencies from protecting the public's health from climate change and the many other environmental health threats we face as a nation.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Children's Environmental Health Network
Climate Psychiatry Alliance
Health Care Without Harm
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Environmental Health Association
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Public Health Institute