



January 17, 2018

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

As you work toward a deal to fund the federal government for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY2018), the undersigned public health and medical organizations urge you to oppose all policy riders – including those that would block, weaken, or delay critical clean air and public health protections.

Clean air is essential for public health. Air pollution contributes to asthma attacks, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, low birthweight, and premature deaths. While the U.S. has made great progress in reducing dangerous air pollution, nearly four in ten Americans still live where levels of ozone and particle pollution are unhealthy to breathe. Continued implementation and enforcement of the Clean Air Act is a critical investment in the health of our nation.

Both the FY2018 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives in September 2017 and the Interior bill proposed by the Senate in November 2017 contained numerous policy riders that would put health and lives at risk from air pollution, and cut funding for EPA.

Riders in the House-passed bill would delay more protective ozone standards for eight years; block EPA and Bureau of Land Management protections against dangerous methane pollution; encourage the burning of biomass for electricity despite its health risks; and prohibit EPA from accounting for the costs of climate change in its work. The existing Senate interior bill includes report language that underscore some of these harmful measures.

These riders would block or delay efforts to clean up harmful air pollution, leading to asthma attacks and deaths that could be prevented. Children, the elderly, and people with lung and heart disease are at greater risk.

The undersigned organizations urge you to protect the health of your constituents by opposing all riders in bills to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY2018, including any provisions that would endanger public health by weakening the Clean Air Act or hindering EPA's work to clean up harmful air pollution.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

American Thoracic Society

Environment and Human Health, Inc.

National Association of County & City Health Officials

National Medical Association

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Public Health Institute