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Harold P. Wimmer

June 11, 2016

Dear Senator:

The American Lung Association urges you to oppose policy riders that would block, weaken, or delay clean air and public health protections in the FY2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, including language that would encourage or expand the use of biomass for electricity production.

The American Lung Association does not support biomass combustion for electricity production. Burning biomass generates dangerous air pollution that immediately harms human health, placing children, older adults, people with respiratory and cardiovascular disease, diabetics, and people with lower incomes at risk of serious health effects.

Biomass combustion currently uses feed stocks that have proven harm to human health, including wood products, agricultural residues or forest wastes, and potentially highly toxic feed stocks, such as construction and demolition waste. Burning these as fuels contributes pollution to the air we breathe, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and carcinogens such as benzene and formaldehyde.

These pollutants can cause a sweeping array of health harms, from asthma attacks to cancer to heart attacks, resulting in emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and premature deaths.

Since aspects of generating electricity by burning biomass also have the potential to increase carbon emissions, scientists need to continue to review the impact that biomass combustion would have on carbon emissions. Understanding the climate impacts of domestic energy sources requires rigorous scientific review as the nation considers alternative energy sources,

The American Lung Association urges you to keep the FY2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill free of policy riders, including riders that would advance sources of energy that create harmful emissions that put lives at risk or circumvent scientific decisions about whether biomass is carbon-neutral. It is crucial that the nation continue to transition to sources of energy that do not endanger human health or contribute to climate change.

Sincerely,



Harold P. Wimmer
National President and CEO

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