

September 2010

The United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Climate change is a serious public health issue. As temperatures rise, more Americans will be exposed to conditions that can result in illness and death due to respiratory illness, heat- and weather-related stress and disease carried by insects. These health issues are likely to have the greatest impact on our most vulnerable communities, including children, older adults, those with serious health conditions and the most economically disadvantaged.

The latest assessment from the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), the [Global Climate Change Impacts in the U.S.](#), states that “Climate change poses unique challenges to human health. . . . There are direct health impacts from heat waves and severe storms, ailments caused or exacerbated by air pollution and airborne allergens, and many climate-sensitive infectious diseases.”

As public health professionals, we are writing to urge you to recognize the threat to public health posed by climate change and to support measures that will reduce these risks and strengthen the ability of our local, state and federal public health agencies to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change.

In order to prepare for changes already under way, it is essential to strengthen our public health system so it is able to protect our communities from the health effects of heat waves, wildfires, floods, droughts, infectious diseases, and other events. But we must also address the root of the problem, which means reducing the emissions that contribute to climate change. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for protecting the public’s health from climate change, and we urge you to fully support the EPA in fulfilling its responsibilities. **We also urge opposition to any efforts to weaken, delay or block the EPA from protecting the public’s health from these risks.**

To provide the most complete protection for Americans, Congress should resume efforts to pass clean energy and climate legislation that includes strong provisions to protect public health adequately and appropriately. If our organizations may be of further assistance, please contact Don Hoppert with the American Public Health Association at 202-777-2514.

Sincerely,

National organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
American Nurses Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Health Care without Harm
Hepatitis Foundation International
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Local Boards of Health
National Environmental Health Association
Partnership for Prevention
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Trust for America's Health

State and local organizations