



American Academy
of Pediatrics



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AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
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Children's
Environmental
Health
Network



National Association of County & City Health Officials



PHYSICIANS
FOR SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY



WWW.HEALTHYAMERICANS.ORG

June 13, 2016

Dear Representative:

The undersigned public health and medical organizations urge you to support increased funding levels for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and oppose policy riders that would block, weaken, or delay critical clean air and public health protections in the FY2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

EPA must have the funding it needs to continue its work to protect public health. From Flint, MI to Porter Ranch, CA, the American public has seen all too clearly the disastrous consequences of failing to adequately invest in environmental health protections. That is why our organizations are concerned that the FY2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill would weaken EPA's ability to protect public health under the Clean Air Act; doing so could threaten the agency's ability to fund the work states and tribes do to monitor air quality and to enforce lifesaving clean air safeguards nationwide.

Furthermore, our organizations urge you to keep all FY 2017 Appropriations bills free of harmful policy riders. The current Interior, Environmental and Related Agencies Appropriations bill contains a number of riders that would weaken critical clean air protections, leading to illnesses and premature deaths that could have otherwise been avoided. These harmful riders include:

Sec. 438. This rider would delay implementation of the updated 2015 national ozone standard. Ground-level ozone, often called smog, causes breathing problems, asthma attacks, and premature death. Last year, EPA adopted new limits on ozone that will better protect our health, based on a thorough review of current science. Unfortunately, this rider would delay those new limits for eight years, resulting in more illnesses and premature deaths. Furthermore, continued reliance on outdated standards will mislead people who need information about their local air quality to protect their health, including parents of children with asthma. Congress should not support a provision that lulls parents into thinking the air is safe to breathe on a day when doctors and scientists have made clear that it can harm their children's health. The 2015 ozone standard must be implemented without further delay.

Sec. 431. The dangerous provisions in this section would block EPA's Clean Power Plan and indefinitely delay limits on greenhouse gasses from new power plants. Power plants are the nation's largest single source of carbon pollution, which leads to climate change. EPA's Clean Power Plan will take a crucial step forward in limiting carbon pollution and curbing climate change; it will also reduce other harmful air pollutants at the same time, preventing up to 3,600 premature deaths and 90,000 childhood asthma attacks every year once fully implemented. To

protect public health from climate change, EPA must be able to use its authority under the Clean Air Act to limit dangerous carbon pollution from power plants.

Furthermore, warmer temperatures make unhealthy levels of ozone pollution more likely, causing asthma attacks and premature deaths. Climate change also contributes to droughts and wildfires, which can lead to more particle pollution that puts lives at risk, triggering asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes and premature death. The 2016 [Climate and Health Assessment](#), an extensive scientific assessment of peer-reviewed research from the U.S. Global Change Research Program, found that the U.S. is already experiencing increases in climate-related health impacts. Cutting carbon pollution is essential to protecting human health.

Sec. 439. This provision would block EPA’s recently adopted limits on methane pollution from new and modified oil and gas facilities, and block EPA from setting limits on existing facilities. Methane is a potent climate change pollutant. The standards to limit methane from new sources in the oil and gas industry will not only limit methane, but also volatile organic compounds, including carcinogens and toxic gasses that can react to form ozone. To protect public health, EPA must implement the new source standards and set limits for existing oil and gas sources. A recent public opinion poll conducted by Global Strategies Group for the American Lung Association showed that voters support the EPA’s new methane emission limits by a margin of 2:1.

Pg. 83, lines 3-18. This rider would declare forest biomass emissions to be carbon-neutral under certain circumstances. Our organizations do not support biomass combustion for electricity production, as it generates dangerous air pollution in addition to carbon that causes asthma attacks, heart attacks, and premature death. Congress must not ignore the negative health impacts of increased burning of biomass.

Sec. 436. This rider would delay EPA’s work by forcing them to reconsider the social cost of carbon, a measurement that allows for the calculation of costs and benefits of rules that impact carbon emissions. It would also bar EPA from considering costs outside the United States. Congress needs to allow the administration to assess the full costs on human health and other impacts caused by our pollution, and the full benefits of any actions to improve energy efficiency or clean up carbon pollution.

The undersigned organizations urge you to protect the health of your constituents by taking two crucial steps: oppose these riders in the FY2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agency Appropriations bill, along with any other provisions that would endanger public health by weakening the Clean Air Act or hindering the EPA’s work to clean up harmful air pollution; and support adequate funding for EPA to carry out this critical work.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

Children’s Environmental Health Network

National Association of County and City Health Officials

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Trust for America’s Health