



June 24, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Members Cole and Blunt:

The undersigned public and environmental health organizations urge you to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Climate and Health Program to \$110 million in the FY 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Our groups originally requested a different amount, but we have changed our request to reflect the amount in the President's discretionary budget request as we agree with the need for a more robust increase. This funding is necessary to help state and local health departments prepare and protect their communities from the health threats posed by climate change that they are already experiencing.

Climate change is a public health emergency. Urgent action is needed to reduce the carbon, methane and other emissions that cause climate change and stave off worse impacts in the future, but we must also provide the public health workforce with adequate resources to identify risks and develop and implement climate adaptation action plans to protect communities across the country. CDC's Climate and Health Program is the only federal program that helps states, cities, territories and Tribes prepare for and respond to the specific health impacts of climate change.

These health impacts threaten the patients and communities that our organizations serve. Broadly speaking, these impacts include increased spread of vector-borne diseases like Lyme Disease, degraded air quality from ozone pollution and wildfire smoke, hotter temperatures, extreme weather events and longer allergy seasons, as well as increased psychological stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma. Most health effects of climate change will fall most heavily on already-vulnerable populations, exacerbating health disparities. Communities and states must have the resources necessary to understand their specific current and anticipated health impacts of climate change and take steps to protect the public's health.

The Climate and Health Program currently funds 16 states, two cities, and provides mini-grants to a number of Tribes and localities. (covering 50 percent of the U.S. population). Examples of the projects supported by this program include: the development of a vulnerability mapping tool in Massachusetts; a climate change and healthy homes curriculum for community health workers in Maryland; the identification of specific communities at greatest risk due to sea level rise in North Carolina; and educational programs for rural elders on heat stress and for day-camp counselors on tick exposures in New Hampshire.

The Climate and Health Program has been hindered in its ability to rise to its full – and necessary – potential due to insufficient funds. Increasing funding for this program to \$110 million would serve three critical purposes. First, it would allow CDC to implement a 50-state program, becoming a national resource and financial support system for states as they prepare for and respond to climate change. It would also allow CDC to provide support to additional Tribes, territories, cities and counties. Second, it would improve the program's ability to fill gaps in climate surveillance by better integrating weather and ecological system data with health outcomes. Third, it would allow CDC to offer more scientific and epidemiological studies and resources on climate change and the health outcomes stemming from it. Additionally, CDC would be better equipped to evaluate the grantees' work to identify and be able to share best practices with communities nationwide.

Americans today experience negative health impacts due to climate change. Further investment in the Climate and Health Program will help communities across the country better prepare and protect their residents from the many health threats we are already experiencing due to climate change. Thank you for considering our recommendation and we look forward to working with you throughout the appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Physicians
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Psychological Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Big Cities Health Coalition
Children's Environmental Health Network
Climate for Health
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Endocrine Society
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Care Without Harm
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Black Nurses Association
National Environmental Health Association
National League for Nursing
National Network of Public Health Institutes
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Prevention Institute
Society for Public Health Education
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Trust for America's Health