



April 23, 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  
International Society for Environmental Epidemiology -- North American Chapter  
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