

**Testimony of Harold P. Wimmer**  
National President and CEO, American Lung Association  
**Senate Committee on Appropriations**  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
**Re: Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) appropriations for key public health programs within the  
Environmental Protection Agency**

May 23, 2023

Summary of FY 2024 Appropriations Recommendations:

EPA topline – \$12 billion  
Clean Air Program overall – \$915.5 million  
Climate Protection Program – \$181.2 million  
Categorical Grants: State and Local Air Quality Management – \$500 million  
Categorical Grants: Tribal Air Quality Management – \$57.4 million  
Compliance Monitoring – \$162.1 million  
Enforcement – \$391.4 million  
Environmental Justice - \$369.1 million  
Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program – \$150 million  
EPA Radon Program - \$5 million  
Categorical Grant: Radon – \$18 million

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to highlight the funding priorities of the American Lung Association within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for fiscal year 2024 (FY24). The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. Between the toll of lung cancer, the prevalence of asthma and the harms of unhealthy air, investments in the nation's lung health are critical. We urge the Committee to support \$12 billion in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA programs play an important role in efforts to improve lung health and save lives. The Agency is responsible for setting and enforcing national air pollution standards, supporting air quality monitoring and pollution reduction efforts and educating the public about air toxics and air pollution. With the passage of clean air and climate investments in 2022, EPA is also responsible for administering millions of dollars in grant programs to states, localities, Tribes and other entities to reduce pollution and improve health. Air pollution poses a threat to the

health of all Americans, but some individuals are at heightened risk of health harms from breathing polluted air. There are nearly 34.1 million Americans living with a chronic lung disease like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Children, seniors, individuals who are pregnant and people who work and play outside are also more likely to suffer health harms. Additionally, people of color and with low incomes often face a greater risk of exposure to air pollution. The Lung Association’s 2023 “State of the Air” report found that 64 million people of color and 14.6 million people with incomes meeting the federal poverty definition live in counties that received a failing grade for ozone and/or particle pollution.<sup>1</sup>

**Provide \$915.5 million for EPA’s Clean Air Program.** We strongly support robust funding for EPA in FY24 to ensure continued pollution cleanup. Funds under EPA’s Clean Air Program are used in part to assist states, Tribes and local air pollution control agencies with implementing comprehensive air quality management programs to meet the national air quality standards. This program also includes testing and oversight to ensure vehicles are emitting lawful amounts of pollution into the air as well as efforts to reduce carbon pollution, methane, and other climate pollutants to protect public health from the impacts of climate change. Please provide \$694.6 million for Environmental Programs and Management and \$220.9 million for Science and Technology. Within this program area, the Lung Association specifically requests \$181.2 million for the Climate Protection Program across Environmental Programs and Management and Science and Technology.

**Provide \$500 million for State and Local Air Quality Monitoring Grants and \$57.4 million for Tribal Air Quality Monitoring Grants.** Accurately monitoring the air we breathe is the first step to addressing air pollution. Unfortunately, state, local and Tribal air agencies – who run most of the nation’s air quality monitoring system – continue to face budget shortfalls and many areas are operating with out-of-date monitors. Grant dollars provided under Section 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act help fund air quality monitoring work, which informs the public of risks to their health and identifies areas in need of cleanup. Funds included under the American Rescue Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act were necessary to make some progress after years of underfunding, but are not a replacement for regular and dependable funding through the regular appropriations process so that air agencies can plan for multi-year, sustained investments in air monitoring. Both the National Association of Clean Air Agencies and the National Tribal Air Association conducted baseline needs assessments of their members to determine what would be needed to successfully implement programs under current and anticipated federal requirements. The results showed that air agencies need increases if they are to adequately protect health by

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<sup>1</sup> The American Lung Association. State of the Air, April 2023 <https://www.lung.org/sota>

monitoring air pollution levels.<sup>2,3</sup> Please provide \$500 million for State and Local Air Quality Management Categorical Grants and \$57.4 million for Tribal Air Quality Management Categorical Grants.

**Provide \$162.1 million for Compliance Monitoring, \$391.4 million for enforcement and \$369.1 million for environmental justice efforts.** Compliance with EPA’s air quality rules must be enforced to truly achieve the rules’ intended health benefits. Investment in EPA’s enforcement work is critical to ensure the public is protected from dangerous air pollution as the law requires. EPA must have the ability and funding needed to reduce non-compliance, as well as enforce penalties for violations. EPA must also be prepared to respond to civil enforcement actions authorized by the Clean Air Act. Additionally, air pollution does not impact everyone equally. The Administration has tasked EPA with prioritizing righting environmental injustices. To do so effectively, EPA needs dedicated funding for environmental justice. Please provide \$162.1 million for compliance monitoring, \$391.4 million for enforcement and \$369.1 million dedicated for achieving environmental justice commitments.

**Provide \$150 million for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act and Support the Clean School Bus Program.** The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program continues to receive bipartisan support. While progress has been made, millions of old, dirty diesel engines are still polluting communities and causing lung cancer. According to a 2022 EPA report, the Committee’s continued investments in this program prove cost-effective, with monetized health benefits estimated to exceed federal funding by a factor of 10. We urge the Committee to appropriate \$150 million in FY24. Additionally, we urge the Committee to continue supporting the rapid transition to zero emission school buses through the Clean School Bus Program. The program has proven very popular, with around 2,000 applications for the first round of rebate funding. Millions of children ride a bus to school, exposing them to pollution from these dirty diesel engines. Investing in the transition to zero-emission electric school buses will provide a safer, healthier environment for children, who are among those most at risk of health harm from breathing in pollution.

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<sup>2</sup>National Association of Clean Air Agencies Recommendations for FY 2024 Federal Grant Funding for State and Local Clean Air Agencies, October 2022 <https://www.4cleanair.org/wp-content/uploads/NACAA-FY-2024-Grant-Recommendations-adopted.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> National Tribal Air Association. Tribal Air Quality Priorities and the Resources to Address those Priorities: *Key Findings of the National Baseline Needs Assessment Among American Indian and Alaska Native Communities*, May 2022 <https://www.ntatribalair.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/5.5.22-NTAA-Baseline-Needs-Assessment-Key-Findings.pdf>

**Provide \$5 million for EPA's Radon Program and \$18 million for State Indoor Radon Grants.** Radon is an odorless, colorless gas that seeps through the ground as it shifts and is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. EPA's radon program and its State Indoor Radon Grants are the only nationwide tools that help prevent exposure to radon. States and Tribes depend on these programs to educate the public and fight this deadly carcinogen. We recommend \$5 million for EPA's Radon Program and \$18 million for the State Indoor Radon Grants. Additionally, we recommend that the Agency prioritize SIRG funding to states are seeking to adopt or strengthen certification requirements for radon measurement and mitigation workers.

**Oppose all policy riders.** Lastly, the American Lung Association also asks for your leadership in opposing all policy riders that would weaken key lung health protections, including those in the Clean Air Act. Policy riders have no place in appropriations bills, and the Lung Association strongly opposes attempts to include them, especially riders that would make it harder to protect Americans from air pollution.

Investments in EPA programs are critical to protecting public health. On behalf of the Lung Association, I thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold Wimmer  
President & CEO