

**Testimony of Harold P. Wimmer**

President and CEO, American Lung Association

**Senate Committee on Appropriations**

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

**Re: Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) appropriations for key public health programs within the Environmental Protection Agency and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**

May 15, 2026

Summary of FY 2027 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 – \$85.25 million  
Compliance Monitoring – \$162.1 million  
Enforcement – \$485 million  
Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program – \$150 million  
EPA Radon Program – \$5 million  
Categorical Grant: Radon – \$18 million  
Wildfire Smoke Preparedness – \$15 million  
Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division – \$100 million  
ATSDR – \$100 million

The American Lung Association is the trusted champion for lung health, working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. Our mission includes ensuring everyone has access to clean air, which is why we again urge the Committee to support \$12 billion in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency.

When robustly funded and administered following the law, EPA programs improve lung health and save lives. Air pollution poses a threat to the health of all Americans, but some individuals are at elevated risk. There are 35.2 million Americans living with a chronic lung disease like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Pregnancy is also a risk factor. Children and seniors, as well as people who work outdoors, are also more likely to suffer health harms. Additionally, there are communities across the country that face elevated levels of pollution due to the proximity of polluting sources like power plants, industrial facilities or major highways. The Lung Association’s “State of the Air” report – which relies on air monitoring data from EPA – consistently finds that the burden of pollution exposure is not evenly spread.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The American Lung Association. State of the Air, April 2025 <https://www.lung.org/sota>

EPA works with states, localities, Tribes and other entities to maximize health benefits and community resilience. Without a functioning EPA, families are at risk of breathing dirty air, drinking dirty water and facing exposure to dangerous toxic chemicals. And a functioning EPA depends on reliable funding, staffing and infrastructure. In 2025, EPA lost around 4,000 staff, which represents about a 10% cut below President Reagan-era levels.<sup>2</sup> We greatly appreciate the committee's inclusion of language in the FY26 appropriations bill that EPA shall maintain adequate staffing to fulfill the agency's mission. We strongly encourage the Committee's continued commitment to increasing – and enforcing – EPA staffing levels.

The American Lung Association urges robust investments in EPA and highlights the following key programs:

**Provide \$915.5 million for EPA's Clean Air lines.** EPA's Clean Air line is necessary to achieving the agency's mission. Through this funding line, EPA assists states, Tribes and localities with implementing flexible, comprehensive air quality management programs and provides testing and oversight to ensure unlawful pollution is not impacting the health of communities. Please provide \$694.6 million for Environmental Programs and Management and \$220.9 million for Science and Technology.

Additionally, we urge the Committee to include the following language:

*Health Benefits: The Committee notes that in recent rulemakings, the Agency adopted a new approach to analyzing the impacts of its actions that excludes monetized costs of reductions in air pollution. The Committee asks the Agency to provide a briefing to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee within 60 days of enactment of this Act detailing the scientific basis for any proposed changes, the anticipated impact on public health protections, and how the Agency intends to maintain transparency regarding air pollution and associated health risks.*

**Provide \$500 million for State and Local Air Quality Monitoring Grants and \$85.25 million for Tribal Air Quality Monitoring Grants.** Accurately monitoring air quality is necessary to ensure resources to clean up pollution are used effectively. Unfortunately, state, local and Tribal air agencies – which run the nation's official air quality monitoring system with funding and support from EPA – continue to face budget shortfalls, a monitoring system in need of upgrades and a lack of dependable, robust federal support, all while communities across the country are breathing unhealthy air. State, local and Tribal air agencies are the critical first step to ensuring clean air for all and require more robust funding to adequately perform their duties.

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<sup>2</sup> [Environmental Protection Network, Staffing Factsheet. February 2026](#)

**Provide \$162.1 million for Compliance Monitoring and \$485 million for enforcement efforts.** EPA must have the resources and capacity to ensure that agency actions are complied with, as well as to enforce penalties for violations. EPA must also be prepared to respond to civil enforcement actions authorized by the Clean Air Act. Additionally, some communities face higher uphill climbs to achieve clean air and the health benefits it provides. Ensuring that the communities most impacted by pollution are targeted for clean-up not only provides the greatest health benefits, it's also widely supported and cost-effective.

**Provide \$150 million for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Program and support the Clean School Bus Program.** The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program is a bipartisan, voluntary program to clean up cancer-causing diesel emissions. Millions of legacy diesel engines are still in use today, emitting large amounts of pollution. DERA is cost-effective, with monetized health benefits exceeding federal funding by a factor of 10. We also urge the Committee to continue supporting the bipartisan, popular Clean School Bus Program. Over 900 school districts have received awards to replace over 6,100 diesel school buses with cleaner, low or zero-emission versions which will provide a safer, healthier environment for children, who are among those most at risk of health harm from air pollution.

**Provide \$5 million for EPA's Radon Program and \$18 million for State Indoor Radon Grants.** Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and is estimated to result in 21,000 deaths annually. EPA's radon program and State Indoor Radon Grants are critical for reducing radon exposure and a necessary component of a comprehensive cancer reduction strategy. Significant progress has been made in reducing radon risks, but more than 90,000 homes each year still require radon fixes. There are also key challenges in protecting people from radon exposure that need to be addressed, such as financial barriers to radon testing and mitigation lack of tenant protections. We recommend that the Agency prioritize SIRG funding to states that are seeking to adopt or strengthen certification requirements for radon measurement and mitigation workers, including the adoption of national consensus standards.

**Please provide \$100 million for the Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division and \$10 million to EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection.** Pollution exposure in the classroom can be particularly dangerous, as children are more susceptible to the health harms from pollution. It can decrease attendance, negatively impact test scores and harm health such as by worsening asthma symptoms. 41% of school districts were found to be in need of HVAC repairs in at least half of their schools.<sup>3</sup> EPA guidance and assistance is necessary to help school districts access funding opportunities. Additionally, the Office of Children's Health Protection plays a critical role in researching children's risks and exposures in school and

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<sup>3</sup> Government Accountability Office. (2020). K-12 Education: School Districts Frequently Identified Multiple Building Systems Needing Updates or Replacement (GAO-20-494)

childcare facilities. Improving indoor air quality in schools will benefit children's health both in the short term and long term.

**Please provide \$15 million for wildfire smoke preparedness.** Wildfire smoke is an urgent threat to public health. States across the country – not just in the western US – have experienced the impacts that wildfire smoke can have on health. Furthering the nation's understanding of the depth and magnitude of that health impact as well as identifying what interventions are most impactful will help officials respond in effective ways and spend resources wisely.

**Please provide \$100 million for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.** ATSDR uses a community-based approach to help bolster the public health response to environmental hazards. In addition to expanding the capacity of state health departments, they also help support Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unity (PESHUs) to address fetal and children's environmental health impacts.

**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 under 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.

On behalf of the Lung Association, I thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harold Wimmer".

Harold Wimmer  
President and CEO