



April 3, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 "O" Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mike McGuire
President Pro Tempore,
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8610
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker, California Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: State Budget Proposal – Fully Support California Clean Air Programs

Dear Governor Newsom, Speaker Rivas, and Pro Tem McGuire:

You have made California a leader by our prior investments and landmark programs to reduce harmful pollutants. Your ongoing leadership in California's clean air progress is critical in the face of health burdens, disparities and the climate crisis. We urge you to continue to support that commitment. Recognizing the difficult budget choices facing California, the American Lung Association calls on you to fully fund clean air programs that provide critical health benefits to all Californians, and especially our most disadvantaged communities. Press statements and coverage of veiled agreements on early action indicate significant reductions are being considered to lifesaving clean air programs. California's leadership and investments made to clean our air must continue to avoid start-stop progress.

Cuts to clean air and climate programs threaten to delay and defer life-saving benefits of emission reduction programs and set up more costly health impacts into the future.

California has the most difficult air pollution challenges in the United States and climate change is making the job of cleaning our air more difficult. According to the American Lung Association's [State of the Air 2023](#) report, California is home to six of the top ten cities with the worst ozone (smog) in the nation, and six of the ten most impacted by annual particle pollution (soot). Over 90 percent of Californians live in an area impacted unhealthy air. We are deeply concerned that funds for clean air programs are at risk.

The American Lung Association's recent report, "[Living and Breathing in California: Health Benefits of Clean Air Programs](#)," illustrates that recently approved California clean air policies could generate over \$200 billion in public health benefits and save over twenty thousand lives over the coming decades. In addition, these programs will also significantly reduce cancer risk for California's most disadvantaged communities living near warehouses, railyards, and ports. To ensure accelerated clean up, especially in our most impacted communities, we urge you to support clean air programs in the budget in the following ways:

- Fully fund programs to ensure the benefits of clean technologies are available and accessible to all communities, including alternatives to driving (transit, active transportation, equitable mobility options), zero-emission transportation (Clean Cars For All, drayage trucks and other heavy-duty vehicles, small off-road engines, commercial harbor craft, port equipment, etc.) and equitable building decarbonization that are all slated for cuts or lack proposed funding.

- Support state and local air quality agency efforts to implement new federal particle pollution standards, grants for air district prescribed fire activities and implementation of AB 617 Clean Air Protection programs and incentives.
- Cut fossil fuel subsidies and polluting infrastructure like freeway expansions that work against our clean air progress before proposing cuts to lifesaving clean air programs. Shifting funds from polluting purposes to clean air investments can alleviate pressure on limited resources available in a challenging budget year.
- Ensure federal funds do not displace clean air funding in California - vast federal funds must work in tandem with ongoing state investment to maximize public health benefits for all communities.
- Ensure adequate attention is paid to clean air programs in climate bond discussions. Notably, the transportation sector is the leading source of climate pollution in California, and by far the largest source of ozone- and particle-forming oxides of nitrogen (NO_x). Long-term funding for zero-emission transportation must be addressed.

We are at a critical point to lead and show that we can realize lifesaving clean air benefits by continuing investing in these programs and not cut or delay funding. Clean air and a healthy climate are not luxuries, they are fundamental for all Californians.

We urge you to continue California's clean air leadership and ensure funding for critical clean air programs is in place to support clean air and a healthy climate. Please contact William.Barrett@Lung.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Will Barrett
Senior Director,
Nationwide Clean Air Advocacy

Mariela Ruacho
Senior Manager
California Clean Air Advocacy