

**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 (FY) 2022 appropriations for key public health programs within the Environmental Protection Agency**

June 24, 2021

Summary of FY 2022 Appropriations Recommendations:

Clean Air Program overall – \$573.2 million

Climate Protection Program – \$115.9 million

Federal Support for Air Quality Management – \$171 million

Federal Vehicle Fuels Standards and Certifications Programs – \$110.2 million

Categorical Grants: State and Local Air Quality Management – \$321.5 million

Categorical Grants: Tribal Air Quality Management – \$31 million

Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program – \$150 million

Categorical Grant: Radon – \$8.9 million

EPA Radon Program - \$3.3 million

Compliance Monitoring – \$132.4 million

Enforcement – \$566.5 million

New Wildfire Smoke Protection Program: \$15 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 2022. 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, the harms of unhealthy air and the COVID-19 pandemic, investments in the nation's lung health are critical. We appreciate the robust increases for EPA provided in the President's FY22 Budget and have updated a number of our requests to reflect the President's request.

EPA programs save lives and improve lung health. The Agency is responsible for setting and enforcing national air pollution standards; supporting state, local and Tribal air quality monitoring and pollution reduction efforts; educating the public on air toxics and air pollution; issuing grants to retrofit dirty diesel buses and more. Air pollution poses a threat to the health of all Americans, but there is someone in every family at heightened risk of health harms from breathing polluted air. There are nearly 37 million Americans living with a chronic lung disease like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Children, seniors, pregnant people and those who work and play outside are also more likely to suffer health harms.

Additionally, people of color and those with low incomes face a greater risk of exposure to air pollution due to communities being overlooked for investment and enforcement in addition to longstanding racist practices like redlining.

The President's recently announced budget included a more than 20% increase for EPA. We strongly support this overall increase in investment and ask the Committee to ensure increased funding for programs that help promote clean air and enforce 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 \$434.1 million for Environmental Programs and Management and \$139.1 million for Science and Technology. Within this program area, the Lung Association specifically requests \$115.9 million for the Climate Protection Program; \$171 million for Federal Support for Air Quality Management; and \$110.2 million for Federal Vehicle Fuels Standards and Certifications Programs.

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 – have been perennially underfunded, and many areas are operating with out-of-date monitors. According to a recent report from the Government Accountability Office, there has actually been a 20% decrease in funds, adjusted for inflation, since 2004.<sup>1</sup> 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. We were pleased to see funds included in the recently passed American Rescue Plan, but we know that more is needed so that state, local and Tribal air agencies can add, upgrade and maintain air monitors and improve engagement with the public to protect health, as part of a multi-year, sustained investment in these critical programs. Please provide \$321.5 million for State and Local Air Quality Management Categorical Grants and \$31 million for Tribal Air Quality Management Categorical Grants.

Additionally, EPA must be able to ensure compliance with national air standards, which mean little if they are not enforced. Continued investment in EPA's enforcement work is critical to ensure accountability when it comes to protecting the public from dangerous air pollution. EPA

---

<sup>1</sup> Government Accountability Office. (2020). Air Pollution: Opportunities to Better Sustain and Modernize the National Air Quality Monitoring System (GAO-21-38)

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. Please provide \$132.4 million for EPA's Compliance Monitoring and \$566.5 million for Enforcement. Enforcement funding should include dedicated funding for environmental justice enforcement. Included in enforcement funding should be dedicated funding for environmental justice enforcement.

One of the programs within EPA that continues to receive bipartisan support is the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program. Millions of old, dirty diesel engines are in use today that pollute communities, threaten workers and cause lung cancer. According to a 2019 EPA report, the Committee's continued investments in this program have yielded up to \$30 in health benefits for every \$1 spent.<sup>2</sup> Immense opportunities remain to reduce diesel emissions through the DERA program, and we urge the Committee to appropriate \$150 million in FY22. Additionally, we urge the Committee to support the rapid transition to electric school buses. When schools safely reopen, millions of children will ride a bus to school every day, exposing them to pollution from these dirty diesel engines. Investing in the transition to 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.

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 \$3.3 million for EPA's Radon Program (within that, \$3.1 million be appropriated for Environmental Program and Management and \$158,000 for Science and Technology) and \$8.9 million for the State Indoor Radon Grants.

For the second year, we are requesting a new program to be housed with EPA. Wildfires are no longer a rare occurrence, making wildfire smoke an urgent and increasing threat to health. Currently there are knowledge gaps, particularly on how wildfires affect the health of those living in downwind states, and there is a lack of a focused federal response to health impacts. EPA would be well equipped to provide that federal response with additional resources. The Lung Association requests a total of \$15 million in funding to address these impacts, including \$5 million to establish Wildfire Smoke Health Centers in Collaboration with US Forest Service Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory; \$7 million for targeted research on wildfire smoke exposure

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-07/documents/420r19005.pdf>

and policy; and \$3 million for EPA to coordinate interagency science, management and communication strategies for addressing wildfires.

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.