

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2009

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Simpson:

We write to urge you to provide robust funding for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act program (“DERA”) and for state and local air pollution control agencies in the pending fiscal year 2010 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Strong support for these vital air quality initiatives will help achieve the twin goals of economic recovery and environmental protection.

Thanks to your leadership, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$300 million for DERA, funding which will be fully awarded by the end of this month. By supporting DERA at this level, Congress recognized the tremendous value of the program in saving jobs, promoting health, and improving the environment. While the Environmental Protection Agency has done an outstanding job implementing the DERA program as required under the recovery package, the agency has also been overwhelmed with applications far outstripping the \$300 million provided for it by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Specifically, EPA has already received over 650 applications for the federal portion of DERA, totaling over \$2 billion in requested funding that would generate another two billion local matching dollars.

In light of this clear and apparent demand for further diesel retrofit funding, we urge you to provide \$200 million for DERA in the fiscal year 2010 appropriations bill under your subcommittee’s jurisdiction. Such robust funding would help to alleviate the significant unmet demand for diesel retrofit funding, and would also do much to restore the economic health of communities across our country that are dependent on the automobile industry (and that are suffering severely as a result of the challenges currently facing that sector of our economy). The DERA program has also always been—and continues to be—a sound federal investment: it leverages two state and local dollars for every federal dollar invested in the program, and it provides \$13 of economic benefit for every dollar spent on DERA activities.

Air quality grants to state and local entities have demonstrated similar effectiveness in the past. With this in mind, we urge your subcommittee to boost by \$46 million above fiscal 2009 appropriated levels the federal funding commitment for these grants under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act. Such an increase will result in a total appropriation of \$270 million to help state and local air pollution agencies install pollution control technologies; assess the effects of air pollution on local communities; prepare state implementation plans; and monitor carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic contaminants. State and local governments hold

primary responsibility for preventing and controlling air pollution, and they rely on these grants to carry out their core obligations under the Clean Air Act. However, just as states' responsibilities to protect clean air are growing, federal support for these programs has deteriorated by about 33 percent in purchasing power terms over the last 15 years. A modest increase on the order of that requested by us today will do much to help state and local jurisdictions meet their Clean Air Act mandates, and will help clean the air and protect our constituents' health in the process.

Thank you for your past support of these vital air quality programs, and for considering our requests to provide sufficient funding for them again in fiscal year 2010. We look forward to working with you in the future to support these and similar programs that invest in our economy, protect the quality of our air, and preserve our environment for future generations.

Sincerely,

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