

June 2, 2015

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

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

Dear Congressmen Calvert and McCollum:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA)¹ regarding FY 2016 appropriations for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), specifically grants for state and local air pollution control agencies. The proposed budget calls for \$268.2 million in grants to state and local air quality agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act, an increase of \$40 million above last year (\$25 million of the increase for the implementation of the Clean Power Plan and \$15 million for other continuing activities). NACAA supports this increase and asks that you do everything possible to ensure that the proposed amount is included in the final appropriations. However, rather than identifying a set amount of the increase specifically for the Clean Power Plan, we request that state and local agencies be provided with the flexibility to determine how best to use the \$40 million in additional resources. Additionally, we request that grant funds for fine particulate matter monitoring remain under Section 103 authority, rather than being shifted to Section 105 authority, as EPA is proposing.

Air pollution is an extremely significant public health threat that causes the premature deaths of tens of thousands of people in this country each year and results in many other serious health problems, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, adverse effects on the brain and cancer, among others. State and local air quality agencies have many responsibilities as they work to attain and maintain healthful air quality, including new initiatives to address emerging issues and ongoing activities to preserve the gains in air quality that we have already made. Unfortunately, state and local air quality agencies have

¹ NACAA is a national, non-partisan, non-profit association of air pollution control agencies in 41 states, the District of Columbia, four territories and 116 metropolitan areas. The members of NACAA have the primary responsibility under the Clean Air Act for implementing our nation's clean air program. The air quality professionals in our member agencies have vast experience dedicated to improving air quality in the United States. These observations and recommendations are based upon that experience. The views expressed in this letter do not necessarily represent the positions of every state and local air pollution control agency in the country.

faced a serious shortfall in federal grants for many years, and struggle to continue the critical air quality programs that the public expects and needs.

While the proposed budget increase would not fully address the funding shortfall, it will be essential as we address ongoing responsibilities and new challenges. We can apply the additional funds to a range of critical activities, including planning efforts, expanded monitoring networks, sophisticated modeling, emission inventory development, and the adoption and enforcement of regulations, among other things. The range of essential programs that are necessary makes it especially important for state and local air agencies to be provided the flexibility to use the \$40-million increase for the highest priority activities in their areas, whether those are related to the Clean Power Plan or not.

The President's request also calls for phasing in a shift of fine particulate monitoring funds from Section 103 authority, where no match is needed, to Section 105, which would require additional state and local matching funds. NACAA requests that Congress prevent this shift and call for these funds to remain under Section 103 authority, as you have in the past and for which we are very grateful. For individual agencies that have concerns about the matching requirements, this will ensure that they can continue receiving these monitoring funds.

With respect to the \$4-billion Clean Power State Incentive Fund contained in the proposed budget, NACAA supports this request because it will provide significant support for states and localities to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions related to the Clean Power Plan.

Finally, NACAA is pleased that the proposed budget includes funding for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) program (\$10 million). This is an important program to address emissions from the large legacy fleet of diesel engines. We appreciate that the budget request did not fund DERA at the expense of the Section 103/105 grants and we strongly urge that any future funding for DERA not be in lieu of increases to state and local air grants.

NACAA urges you to promote public health by supporting the President's proposed budget increases for state and local air grants, providing these agencies with flexibility with respect to how increased resources are spent, and ensuring that important fine particulate matter monitoring funds remain under Section 103 authority. We thank you for your support over the years and we hope we can count on your support for FY 2016. If I can provide you with any additional information, please feel free to contact me (bbecker@4cleanair.org) or Mary Sullivan Douglas (mdouglas@4cleanair.org) by email or telephone at (202) 624-7864.

Sincerely,



S. William Becker

cc: House Committee on Appropriations