

September 12, 2019

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The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Shelby and Leahy:

As the Senate prepares to consider FY 2020 appropriations legislation, the members of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA)* wish to emphasize the importance of increased grant funding for state and local air pollution control agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), which are part of the State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) program under the budget of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). **Specifically, NACAA requests that Congress increase state and local air grants by \$82 million above FY 2019 levels (i.e., approximately \$158 million above the Administration's FY 2020 request), for a total of \$310 million.** Federal grants to state and local air quality agencies are the same now as they were 15 years ago in FY 2004 – \$228 million. If the FY 2004 figure is adjusted for inflation, level funding would translate to approximately \$310 million in today's dollars.

While the air has gotten cleaner in some areas, air pollution remains a serious public health problem in this country. Each year it causes tens of thousands of premature deaths and millions of cases of adverse health impacts, including cancer and damage to respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological and reproductive systems. It is the job of state and local air quality agencies to put in place and operate the programs required by the federal Clean Air Act. These responsibilities include, among others, monitoring, planning, modeling, compiling emission inventories, adopting regulations, analyzing data, enforcing regulations and inspecting facilities.

Federal grants for state and local air quality agencies have been inadequate for many years. Nationwide, federal grants support merely 25 percent of state and local air quality programs, even though the original terms of the Clean Air Act envisioned EPA funding up to 60 percent. Moreover, the grants have not kept up with inflation *and* our responsibilities and costs have increased. Because of these deficits, state and local agencies struggle to continue critical air quality programs.

* NACAA is a national, non-partisan, non-profit association of state and local air pollution control agencies in 41 states, including 114 locals, the District of Columbia and four territories.

State and local agencies share the goal of an increased role in carrying out programs under EPA's jurisdiction. The investment of federal dollars in state and local agency activities enables us to be effective in work of vital importance to Americans. The increased inflation-adjusted funding we are recommending would be used for a variety of activities, depending on the highest-priority needs in each area. These would include such things as assuring strong air quality monitoring networks, eliminating clean air planning backlogs, undertaking compliance assurance and supporting the needs of regulated industries by assuring that high quality permits that protect the public are issued efficiently.

We believe it is important that state and local air quality agencies be funded at levels sufficient to accomplish our mission and at the very least to keep pace with inflation. Therefore, we recommend that state and local air quality grants be increased to \$310 million in FY 2020. We thank you for your support in previous years and your ongoing recognition of the importance of healthful air quality for all Americans.

Thank you for your assistance. If we can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us or Mary Sullivan Douglas of NACAA at (202) 624-7864 or mdouglas@4cleanair.org.

Sincerely,



Ali Mirzakhali
Oregon
NACAA Co-President



Richard A. Stedman
Monterey, California
NACAA Co-President

cc: Senate Appropriations Committee