

May 21, 2007

TO: Members of NACAA

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies is expected to hold mark-up of the bill containing EPA's FY 2008 budget on Wednesday (May 23, 2007) or Thursday (May 24, 2007). Full Committee mark-up usually follows shortly thereafter.

You are urged to contact your Representative to request additional funding for Section 103/105 grants, particularly if you have a member of your delegation on the House Appropriations Committee (especially those on the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies). The following is a model letter that you can send to your House member, or use as background information in an email or telephone call.

If you contact a member of your delegation who is NOT on the Subcommittee or Committee, please ask that Representative to relate their concerns and recommendations to the Subcommittee or Committee Chairs:

House Appropriations Committee
Chair – Rep. David Obey (D-WI)
Ranking Member – Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA)

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Chair – Rep. Norman Dicks (D-WA)
Ranking Member – Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R-KS)

While action in the Senate has not yet been scheduled, it would be fine to contact your Senators on this issue as well. We will let you know when we learn the Senate schedule.

MODEL LETTER

May 21, 2007

Dear Congressmen/Senator:

The House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies and the full Appropriations Committee are scheduled to mark up FY 2008 appropriations legislation that includes funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). [name of agency] recommends that EPA grants within the State and Tribal Assistance Grant program for state and local air agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act be increased in FY 2008 by \$80.5 million above the President's request, for a total of \$265.8 million. Additionally, we recommend that grants for the particulate matter monitoring program not be shifted from Section 103 authority to Section 105 authority.

The President's recommended budget for FY 2008 calls for significant reductions in grants to state and local air quality agencies – cuts of \$35.1 million (nearly 16 percent) from FY 2006 levels. These cuts come at a time when air quality agencies, which are already underfunded, need additional resources to meet their responsibilities to the public. Such reductions will have a damaging impact on their ability to protect air quality and public health in this country.

[Insert information about the likely affects of the cuts on your agency. Would you have to lay off staff, curtail monitoring, cut back on inspection and enforcement activities? Would permits for smaller sources take longer to process? Would there be problems with SIP planning etc.?)

The cuts would be further exacerbated by the proposal to shift grants in the particulate matter monitoring program from Section 103 authority (which does not require a 40-percent match from state and local recipients) to Section 105 authority. Under the budget proposal, state and local agencies would need to supply additional matching funds in order to accept the federal monitoring grants. Some agencies do not currently have additional resources for the match and could be forced to turn away some much-needed grant funds.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,