



April 10, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
 Chair
 House Appropriations Subcommittee
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,
 Education, and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
 Ranking Member
 House Appropriations Subcommittee
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,
 Education, and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
 Chair
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,
 Education, and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
 Ranking Member
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,
 Education, and Related Agencies
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin and Ranking Members DeLauro and Capito:

The undersigned health organizations urge you to provide \$110 million under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s environmental health capacity line in the FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to support state and local health departments in their efforts to prepare for and protect their communities from climate-related environmental health hazards.

The undersigned organizations have seen firsthand that climate change is a health emergency. We support efforts to reduce the emissions that will worsen this emergency, but we also recognize that health is already being impacted now and a strong public health response is needed. State, local and Tribal health workers across the country need adequate resources to identify risks and develop and adaptation action plans to protect their communities. CDC’s Climate and Health Program is the only federal program that helps states, cities, territories and Tribes prepare for and respond to the specific local climate-related environmental health impacts their residents face.

The communities that our organizations serve are under threat from environmental hazards. These threats include increased spread of vector-borne diseases like Lyme Disease, degraded air quality, catastrophic wildfires, excessive heat, extreme weather events and longer allergy seasons. Communities must have the resources necessary to understand their specific current and anticipated health impacts and take steps to improve public health outcomes.

CDC currently funds nine states, two localities, Puerto Rico Public Health Trust, Florida State University and three Tribes. Examples of the projects that have been supported by this program include: a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response addressing heat vulnerability in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; a dashboard for real-time tracking of tick-borne illnesses in Maine; a study of the health effects of tropical storms and hurricanes in Florida using emergency department data; and the training of emergency response personnel, health care providers and public health practitioners in Oregon on strategies to reduce health impacts and improve resilience. The value of this program lies in its ability to provide flexibility for states and localities to make their own decisions on what their constituents need as opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach.

However, the Climate and Health Program has not been funded at levels needed to adequately protect health nationwide. Increasing funding for this program to \$110 million would serve three critical purposes. First, it would allow CDC to fund all states and territories, becoming a national resource and financial support system for communities as they prepare for and respond to the health impacts their residents are currently facing. Second, it would improve the program's ability to fill gaps in surveillance by better integrating weather and ecological system data with health outcomes. Third, it would allow CDC to offer more scientific and epidemiological studies and resources on the health outcomes stemming from environmental hazards. Additionally, CDC would be better equipped to evaluate the grantees' work to identify and be able to share best practices with communities nationwide.

The people our organizations serve are already experiencing negative health impacts due to changing climate conditions. Further investment in CDC's Climate and Health Program will help communities across the country better prepare and protect their residents. Thank you for considering our recommendation and we look forward to working with you throughout this year's appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Physicians
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Children's Environmental Health Network
Climate Psychiatry Alliance
ecoAmerica/Climate for Health

Health Care Without Harm
National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners
National Environmental Health Association
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
Oncology Advocates United for Climate and
Health - International
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Trust for America's Health