

May 27, 2010

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S. William Becker

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Dirksen Office Building, SD-131
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Dirksen Office Building, SD-131
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Feinstein and Alexander:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA) regarding the FY 2011 appropriations bill for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), specifically grants for state and local air pollution control agencies. The President's proposed budget calls for \$309.1 million in grants to state and local air quality agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act, which includes a much-needed \$82.5-million increase above last year's appropriation. NACAA supports this budget request and asks that you do everything in your power to ensure that the recommended increases are included in the final bill. Additionally, we recommend that grants for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) monitoring continue to be provided under the authority of Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, rather than Section 105.

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, to name just a few. State and local air quality agencies have many responsibilities as they strive 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 faced a serious shortfall in federal grants for many years, making it difficult to continue ongoing programs and take on new challenges facing us. A study we conducted revealed that federal grants to state and local air pollution control agencies should be increased by over \$550 million to adequately support state and local clean air programs. As a result of these funding deficits and the difficult economic times we face, state and local agencies struggle to address the critical air quality problems that deserve our attention and resources.

The proposed budget increase does not fully address our funding deficit, but it will be extremely valuable as we address ongoing responsibilities and new challenges. We can apply the additional funds to a host of important activities, including emission inventory development, sophisticated modeling, planning efforts, expanded monitoring networks, and the adoption and enforcement of regulations, among other things.

The President's request also calls for shifting 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 they have in the past. For individual agencies that have concerns about the matching requirements, this will ensure that they can continue receiving these monitoring funds.

I urge you to promote public health by supporting the President's proposed budget increases for state and local air grants. Thank you for any assistance you can offer and I hope we can count on your support. 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: Senate Committee on Appropriations