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**For Immediate Release**  
**April 27, 2009**

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**State and Local Air Quality Efforts Hampered by Insufficient Resources**

(Washington, DC) – State and local air quality agencies face considerable budget shortfalls that jeopardize every aspect of their programs and their ability to clean up our nation's air and protect public health, according to a study released today by the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA). The study, *Investing in Clean Air and Public Health*, concludes that without significant infusions of additional funding, these agencies will be hampered in their ability to enforce against polluters, inspect sources, assist small businesses, address climate change, educate the public, monitor the air, craft pollution-reduction strategies and carry out a host of other activities to improve and maintain air quality.

The study notes that air pollution control agencies operated by state and local governments need \$1.3 billion annually – a 47-percent increase over what is currently available – to operate their existing programs and support new activities in the next few years. The study reports that if EPA supplies 60 percent of the amount that is needed, as the Clean Air Act envisions, federal grants should be increased by over \$550 million annually above recent levels to make up this difference and support necessary state and local clean air programs. "Unfortunately, recent federal grants have been in the neighborhood of only \$200 million, which is obviously far short of what is needed," stated Arturo Blanco, Bureau Chief of Air Quality Control in the Houston Department of Health and Human Services and Co-President of NACAA. "If these important public health programs are to be effective and thrive, additional resources are essential," he continued.

NACAA surveyed state and local air pollution control agencies across the country to learn about their current budgets, the additional resources they need for their programs and how they would spend additional infusions of funding. "Air quality agencies have told us that they are facing enormous responsibilities with insufficient funding," said Bill Becker, Executive Director of NACAA. "They have been operating with relatively stagnant federal grants, which actually have decreased by one-third in terms of purchasing power over the last 15 years, due to inflation," he stated.

Federal grants, while essential to many agencies, supply less than one quarter of state and local air pollution control expenditures, while the state and local governments provide over three-fourths of the funds. "State and local air quality agencies already provide the majority of the funding for our programs and, with the current economy, they are in no position to contribute more," said Colleen Cripps Deputy Administrator of the Nevada Division

of Environmental Protection and Co-President of NACAA. “Federal program requirements have increased dramatically over the past decade and that trend is expected to continue. It is critical that the federal government increase contributions to the programs that must be carried out under the Clean Air Act,” she noted.

“Just about every type of effort these agencies undertake is in need of additional resources, ranging from modeling; monitoring; addressing greenhouse gases; reducing toxic air pollution; developing rules; complying with health-based pollution standards; tracking emissions; updating technology; and hiring, training and retaining staff,” stated Bill Becker. “The public health problems resulting from air pollution are too important to receive short shrift in federal budget decisions.”

NACAA is the national association of air pollution control agencies in 53 states and territories and more than 165 metropolitan areas across the country. To view *Investing in Clean Air and Public Health*, or for more information about NACAA, visit the association’s web site at [www.4cleanair.org](http://www.4cleanair.org).

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