

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior, Environment & Related
Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior, Environment & Related
Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As you develop spending priorities for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17), we respectfully request that the Subcommittee on the Department of Interior, Environment and Related Agencies provide robust funding in three areas: (1) hazardous air pollutant monitoring, (2) reviewing, and updating if necessary, pollution standards for area sources, and (3) grants and technical assistance to low-income communities and industries investing in voluntary pollution abatement. We ask for increases of: \$3.376 for Federal Support for Air Quality Management, \$18.849 million for Air, Climate and Energy Research, \$10 million for State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG), \$1.771 for State and Local Air Quality Management Grants, \$10 million for the Environmental Programs and Management appropriation for reviewing and updating area source standards, \$5 million to restore funding to the Targeted Airsheds Grant Program, \$3 million for Federal Support for Air Quality Management, and full funding for the Environmental Justice program. Furthermore, we request the inclusion of report language to require the revision of hazardous air pollution emission standards under the Clean Air Act.

Hazardous air pollutants, such as lead, arsenic, and cadmium, can cause cancer, neurological disorders and other serious health impairments. While these toxic air pollutants are regulated under the Clean Air Act, existing rules have been inadequate at protecting American citizens. For example, in February, heavy metal concentrations were detected in the vicinity of EPA-compliant stained glass manufacturing facilities in Portland, Oregon at levels that were in some cases 150 times greater than Federal health benchmarks. Furthermore, these dangerous shortfalls have been caught only by experimental air quality analysis conducted by non-EPA agencies, indicating that our mainstay national air quality monitoring system is also in need of an upgrade. This is especially true in low-income communities, where some of our most vulnerable populations are exposed to disproportionately high levels of toxic pollutants, and this absolutely must be set right. The good news is that, in many communities, industry wants to do the right thing, responding to public health concerns by investing in pollution abatement that goes above

and beyond the insufficient EPA standards. This sound corporate citizenship needs to be rewarded and further incentivized in a cost-effective manner.

Air Quality Monitoring

To address the challenge of detecting and addressing hazardous air pollution in American communities, we ask for an increase in three program areas within the President's FY17 EPA budget. First, we request an increase of \$3.376 million above the President's FY17 budget for Federal Support of Air Quality Management within the Clean Air and Climate Program Area, which would increase this item to \$12 million. This would provide funding needed to fill data gaps and improve estimates of human exposure to toxic air pollution, providing focused improvement of air quality monitoring systems. Second, we request an increase of \$18.849 million for the Air, Climate and Energy Program, which would amount to a total of \$120 million to support innovative approaches, such as recent work done by the United States Forest Service using moss as a highly cost-effective way for measuring air quality. Third, we request an additional \$5 million for the State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) program, for the Community Scale Air Toxics Monitoring Program. This will support multi-year collaborative studies to address local air quality issues. Fourth, we request an additional \$5 million for STAG to support further state and local air toxics monitoring efforts including a potential expansion of the National Air Toxics Trends Stations program, which currently consists of only 27 stations nationwide. Lastly, we request an increase of \$1.771 million above the President's FY17 budget for a total of \$270 million funding for State and Local Air Quality Management Grants in the Categorical Grants Program Area to conduct and promote state- and local-level air pollution research, experiments, and training. These programs have the potential to foster interagency collaborations and innovative air monitoring programs, such as the USFS' examination of air pollutants found in moss.

Update Federal Air Pollution Standards for Area Sources

To ensure timely review and revision of pollution standards under the Clean Air Act Hazardous Air Pollutants program, we request the Subcommittee increase funding levels for Federal Stationary Source Regulations in the Clean Air and Climate Program Area of the Environmental Programs and Management appropriation. We respectfully request the committee to allocate an additional \$10 million to the Federal Stationary Source Regulations program, \$47.9 million in total, specifically for the purposes of assessing and updating as appropriate the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for area sources. Additionally, funds shall be used for the assessment and management of residual risk subsequent to NESHAP implementation, and the development of related guidance and outreach. These regulations are essential to protecting public health in America's cities, and we appreciate your support in funding them. We suggest the following report language:

Of the additional funds appropriated, the Administrator shall analyze the applicability of, and update if necessary, the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for area sources that have been not been reviewed in accordance with Section 112(d) of the Clean Air Act, which requires area source NESHAPs to be reviewed--and revised as necessary--no less often than every eight years. Additional funds appropriated, shall also be used for the assessment of, and as necessary, regulation of residual risk remaining after NESHAP implementation, and the development of associated national guidance and outreach.

Support Programs for Communities and Industry

To address the disproportionate impact of pollution in low-income communities, we request the Subcommittee provide full funding for the Environmental Justice Program at \$15.291 million. This program supports the EPA in addressing environmental health issues in low-income communities, assists in EPA's outreach to other federal agencies through the interagency working group on environmental justice and provides communities an opportunity to meaningfully engage with the federal government in order to address environmental justice issues. This program is crucial for low-income communities who face disproportionate pollution burdens as it gives them resources to fully participate in the environmental management of their communities.

To mobilize a rapid response at pollution sources, we request funds for two programs to encourage voluntary pollution control. First, we ask for an increase of \$5 million to restore the Targeted Airsheds Grant Program to facilitate voluntary pollution abatement upgrades within stacks and operations of batch furnaces in glass manufacturing facilities and other area sources that are not currently required to control hazardous air pollutant emissions. Second, we request \$3 million above the President's FY17 budget for a total of \$174 million for the Federal Support for Air Quality Management to offer technical assistance to manufacturers making upgrades to their facilities or operations for the purpose of decreasing emissions of toxic air pollutants. Innovations in existing production techniques and installation of pollution abatement technologies can help protect human health and the environment from toxic air pollutants.

The EPA aims to protect air quality but, as we are seeing in Oregon this cannot be done without additional funding to implement air quality programs at a scale that is relevant to defend human health. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator