

September 20, 2017

Dear Congress:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations bill, we urge you to preserve the nearly 50 years of public and environmental health protections by providing at least level funding to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its workforce to carry out its core functions.

As you know, the Administration has called for a 31 percent reduction in EPA's budget. If such a cut were implemented, it would return EPA's budget to its lowest level in nearly its entire 47-year history and would sacrifice the health and welfare of Americans.

EPA has already experienced a steady erosion of its budget over the last few years, currently at nearly its lowest level in real dollars in 40 years. The scope of the proposed cuts for FY 2018 represent a threat to some of the nation's core public health protections and would adversely affect the environmental partnership between EPA, states, and local governments. That partnership has allowed states to carry out programs to protect their citizens, air, land and water. With sharply diminished, or no, funding, the states will still have obligations – including legal obligations—to carry out many programs. Therefore, deep budget cuts will suddenly impose significant new funding requirements—including some unfunded mandates—on states.

To the extent that states cannot make up for the loss of EPA grant funds, public health will be put at risk. In addition, in the case of Superfund and brownfields programs, deep funding cuts will mean slower, longer cleanups, causing more economic harm to communities.

EPA provides distinct expertise, scientific leadership, and funding to protect public health. It also enables states to take a strong role in the design and implementation of environmental protection laws, rules, and programs. As such, we urge you to oppose the proposed deep budget cuts to the agency, and to fund EPA at no less than FY17 levels.

Sincerely,

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