

Honorable Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chair, House Appropriations Committee  
Honorable Congresswoman Nita Lowey, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee

November 22, 2017

Dear Chair Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

We urge Congress to fund healthy homes and childhood lead poisoning prevention programs.

Healthy homes programs are about safe, decent, and sanitary housing as a means for preventing disease and injury. The scientific evidence for connections between housing hazards and health outcomes, such as lead poisoning and asthma, is clear, as are the means to remediate the problem. For example, a recent report from Pew Charitable Trusts on lead poisoning shows that we can save over \$80 billion if we protect children born in 2018 alone and billions more for children born in later years. And home-based asthma visits save more than \$2 for every dollar invested and help protect thousands of children.

Yet, the Administration's proposed budget on healthy homes, including childhood lead poisoning, drastically reduces funding for key programs at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the wake of the tragedies in Flint, East Chicago, and elsewhere, and with an eye to the healthy housing needs after the disasters of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, federal healthy housing programs are needed more than ever.

In its FY18 budget deliberations, we urge Congress to fund healthy homes programs at HUD, CDC, and EPA:

- At **HUD**, the lead hazard control and healthy homes program should be funded at \$230 million.
- At **CDC**, the healthy homes and lead poisoning prevention program should be funded at \$50 million, the asthma control program at \$29 million, and the environmental public health tracking network at \$40 million.
- At **EPA**, programs for lead hazard reduction, radon, and indoor air, as well as categorical grants for radon and lead, should be level-funded from FY17 at a total of \$58.5 million.

We represent thousands of parents, business leaders, professionals, and organizations working to end childhood lead poisoning, advance healthy homes, and end the unnecessary impact of poor housing conditions on children's long-term learning, earnings, and health.

The nation's efforts to address childhood lead poisoning are led by HUD, CDC, and EPA. Each agency's work provides different strengths, and this coordinated effort has worked well. As a result, childhood blood lead levels have declined by over 90% since the 1990s.

However, to this day in America, there are still:

- 400 deaths annually from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning, costing the U.S. \$500 million

- 21,000 deaths annually from radon-related lung cancer, costing the U.S. \$2.9 billion
- 27,000 deaths annually from unintentional falls among older adults, with all fatal unintentional home injuries costing the U.S. \$34 billion
- Over half a million children who still have high blood lead levels and 23 million homes with deteriorated lead paint, lead dust, or lead-contaminated soil, costing the U.S. \$50 billion a year
- 24.6 million people with asthma, costing the U.S. \$63 billion a year

Clearly, there is much more to be done. If we do not rise to meet these needs, we as a nation will simply be forced to react to each new case and each new crisis, continuing to pay a staggering social and financial toll.

**HUD:** We were grateful to see an increase in funding for HUD's **Office of Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes** in FY17 from \$110 to \$145 million. HUD estimates that 265,000 more children would be lead poisoned without this office's actions to control hazards in homes. We urge Congress to continue this work and further increase funding to **\$230 million**.

We also urge Congress to ensure that lead abatement is part of the budget for infrastructure improvements; and we urge Congress to continue to fully fund CDBG, HOME, Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), and public housing, as many states and localities use those funding streams to match HUD lead poisoning prevention grants or for other healthy housing efforts.

**CDC:** CDC's **Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program** conducts needed surveillance of children exposed to lead, provides national data on childhood lead poisoning, ensures that children receive necessary case management, and enables local jurisdictions to take action before children are exposed to lead instead of reacting only after they have been harmed. Screening and surveillance data currently provide the foundation for targeting community prevention activities to areas where the risk is highest. This program has been funded for several years at \$17 million, which is far too little to conduct adequate surveillance in all 50 states. We urge Congress to fund this program at **\$50 million**.

CDC's **National Asthma Control Program** funds states, localities, and other organizations to improve asthma surveillance, awareness, and education. Since its inception, the program has supported asthma control programs in 34 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; asthma death rates have decreased by 27%; and costs due to asthma illness and death have decreased by \$23.1 billion. We urge Congress to support the continuation of this important work and level-fund this program at **\$29 million**.

CDC's **National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program** supports environmental public health tracking and data networks in 25 states and one city. These program has 19 datasets, 96 indicators, and 379 health measures ranging from asthma to drinking water quality and carbon monoxide exposure. To date, state and local health officials have used the Tracking Network over 225 times to prevent sickness and death. We urge Congress to increase funding for this program from **\$34 to 40 million**, which would allow the program to fund three additional states.

**EPA:** EPA's **Lead Categorical Grant** and **Lead Risk Reduction Program** are key to the nation's work on childhood lead poisoning prevention. Through funding for states and EPA regional offices, these programs support science-based standards used to define what lead hazards are in order to protect

pregnant women and vulnerable children; they require lead-safe work practices during renovation, repair, and painting (RRP) work; and they ensure that consumers seeking lead inspection, abatement, and risk assessment services can find qualified, trained individuals to perform the work properly. We urge Congress to level-fund these programs at **\$14.049 million** and **\$13.257 million** respectively.

EPA's **Radon Categorical Grant, Indoor Air: Radon, and Reduce Risk from Indoor Air** programs work to protect residents from health risks associated with indoor air, including radon, which is found in basements and is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., asthma triggers located in the home, and mold, which is a particular concern in the aftermath of flooding. We urge Congress to level-fund these programs at **\$8.051 million, \$2.91 million, and \$13.733 million** respectively.

EPA's **Children and Other Sensitive Populations: Agency Coordination** effort ensures that agency programs protect children's environmental health, including work on developing regulations, improving science policy, implementing programs at the community level, and measuring progress on children's health. We urge Congress to level-fund this program at **\$6.548 million**.

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad, voluntary coalition of over 300 organizations working to improve housing conditions nationwide. The coalition promotes policies for safe and healthy housing in the United States, with special emphasis on those who are disproportionately impacted. Congress has an obligation protect the most vulnerable of its citizens, its children, and the elderly, and that is what this funding does. These vital programs must continue to be fully funded in order to support healthy housing for all.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Dr. David E. Jacobs of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition at [dave@nshhcoalition.org](mailto:dave@nshhcoalition.org) if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Dr. David E. Jacobs  
National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition  
Columbia, MD

cc: Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chair, House HUD Appropriations Subcommittee  
Honorable David Price, Ranking Member, House HUD Appropriations Subcommittee

Honorable Ken Calvert, Chair, House Interior/Environment Appropriations Subcommittee  
Honorable Betty McCollum, Ranking Member, House Interior/Environment Appropriations

Honorable Tom Cole, Chair, House HHS Appropriations Subcommittee  
Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House HHS Appropriations Subcommittee

## Organizations

Amanda Reddy  
Executive Director  
National Center for Healthy Housing  
Columbia, MD

Margie Massie  
President  
ADM Construction  
Dolton, IL

Jane Malone  
National Policy Director  
American Association of Radon Scientists and  
Technologists  
Hendersonville, NC

Aaron Villegas  
Owner  
Arcos Environmental Services Inc  
Tinley Park, IL

John Kane  
Senior Project Coordinator  
Boston Housing Authority  
Boston, MA

William Villalona  
Supervisor of Building/Construction Inspectors  
City of Chicago Department of Public Health  
Chicago, IL

Rick Frenche  
Abatement Operations Mngr.  
City of Philadelphia Health Dept. - Lead & Healthy  
Homes Prorgam (LHHP)  
Philadelphia, PA

Leonard Merritt  
Lead Paint Program Coordinator  
City of Rochester  
Rochester, NY

Lanny Roy  
President  
A Community Voice  
New Orleans, LA

Ronald Peik  
President  
Alpine Environmental Inc.  
Chelmsford, MA

Randy Pence  
Government Affairs Representative  
American Society of Home Inspectors  
Des Plaines, IL

Matt Crochet  
President  
Barr & Clark, Inc  
Huntington Beach, CA

Lyke Thompson  
Director  
Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University  
Detroit, MI

Pat Cacioppo  
Management Assistant  
City of Chino Housing Division  
Chino, CA

Jacqueline Contreras  
Housing Technician  
City of Pomona  
Pomona, CA

Terry Mason, MD  
COO Dept of Public Heath  
Cook County Dept Public Health  
Oak Forest, IL

Anne Evens  
CEO  
Elevate Energy  
Chicago, IL

Joan B. Ketterman  
Training Manager  
Environmental Management Institute  
Indianapolis, IN

Amanda Wiles  
National Coordinator  
Fundred  
Washington, DC

Brett Byerly  
Executive Director  
Greensboro Housing Coalition  
Greensboro, NC

Emily Benfer  
Principal  
Health Justice Innovations, LLC  
Chicago, IL

Rushmore Cervantes  
Rehabilitation Specialist I  
Housing Community Investment Department  
Los Angeles, CA

Margaret Frericks  
Coordinator  
Indiana Healthy Homes Alliance  
Indianapolis, IN

Dennis Jordan  
Principal  
Jordan Consulting  
San Leandro, CA

Lawrence Couch  
Director  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the  
Good Shepherd  
Silver Spring, MD

James Ratti  
General Manager  
Environmental Lead Detect Inc  
San Francisco, CA

Scott Smith  
De-Lead Crew Chief  
First State Community Action Agency  
Georgetown, DE

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative  
Baltimore, MD

Maria Hanlin  
President and CEO  
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro  
Greensboro, NC

Paul Haan  
Executive Director  
Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan  
Grand Rapids, MI

Margaret Frericks  
Program Manager  
Improving Kids' Environment  
Indianapolis, IN

Michael Atallah  
Vice President  
Integrated Property Analysis, Inc.  
Vista, CA

John Bartlett  
Executive Director  
Metropolitan Tenants Organization  
Chicago, IL

Jenae Bjelland  
Executive Director  
National Association for State Community  
Services Programs (NASCSPP)  
Washington, DC

Yvonka Hall  
Executive Director  
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition  
Cleveland, OH

Patricia Barnes  
Executive Director  
Ohio Healthy Homes Network  
Columbus, OH

Denice Brown  
Lead Safe & Healthy Homes Coordinator  
Parks Place Community Resource Center  
Bellows Falls, VT

Lenora S. Smith  
Director  
Partnership Effort for the Advancement of  
Children's Health (PEACH)  
Durham, NC

Julie A Smith  
Executive Director  
Rebuilding Together Central Ohio  
Columbus, OH

Lorisa Seibel  
Director of Housing Programs  
Reinvestment Partners  
Durham, NC

Steve Williams  
Owner  
So Cal Construction Services  
La Mirada, CA

Marie Hurt  
Director  
Southern United Neighborhoods  
New Orleans, LA

Witold Sulik  
President  
SPS Enviro  
Cicero, IL

**Individuals – Organization May Be Listed for Identification Purposes Only**

Candace Abadjian  
Huntington Beach, CA

Thomas Antonio  
HCIDLA  
Los Angeles, CA

Jennifer Becker  
UR Medical Center  
Rochester, NY

Cathy Blume  
Plainfield, IN

Stanley Bodley  
Flossmoor, IL

Mary Jean Brown  
Harvard Chan School of Public  
Health  
Hamden, CT

Carla Campbell  
University of Texas at El Paso  
El Paso, TX

James Cantley  
OHHN  
Grafton, OH

Betty Cantley  
Grafton, OH

Kevin Comer  
CDPH  
Chicago, IL

Jamie Comstock  
Orono, ME

Dr. Nancy Crider  
University of Texas Health  
Science Center Houston  
Houston, TX

Matt Crochet  
Barr & Clark  
Huntington Beach, CA

Robert Duran  
Maravilla Foundation  
Los Angeles, CA

Laura Fudala  
NCHH  
Catonsville, MD

Sayuri Fujita  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
Chicago, IL

Aileen Gagney  
Seattle, WA

Manuel Gonzalez  
Maravilla Foundation  
Commerce, CA

Sarah Goodwin  
National Center for Healthy  
Housing  
Washington, DC

Amanda Gramigna  
Elevate Energy  
Chicago, IL

Patricia Hightower  
Chicago, IL

Emile Jorgensen  
Chicago Department of Public  
Health  
Chicago, IL

John Kane  
Boston Housing Authority  
Boston, MA

Julie Kruse  
Washington, DC

Jack Leonard  
Environmental Management  
Institute  
Indianapolis, IN

Marissa Marsh  
Barr & Clark  
Huntington Beach, CA

Heather Moody  
Siena Heights University  
Adrian, MI

Calvin Murphy  
AARST  
Mt Vernon, IL

Jeremy Nguyen  
Barr and Clark Environmental  
Garden Grove, CA

Denice Norris  
Greensboro Housing Coalition  
Greensboro, NC

Ruth Ann Norton  
Green & Healthy Homes  
Initiative  
Baltimore, MD

Liesl Nydegger  
Austin, TX

Keith Piner  
Barr & Clark  
Huntington Beach, CA

Melissa Pleasant  
Riverside, IL

Barbara Polivka  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, KY

Janet Rubien  
Philadelphia, PA

Jonathan Shein  
Westford, MA

Raynaldo Suarez  
Chicago Department of Public  
Health  
Chicago, IL

Laura Titus  
Healthy Housing Solutions, Inc.  
Columbia, MD

Ellen Tohn  
Tohn Environmental Strategies  
Wayland, MA

David Turcotte  
UMass Lowell and  
Massachusetts Asthma Action  
Partnership (MAAP)  
Lowell, MA

Thomas Vernon  
Washington, DC

Jenna Willems  
Cerro Gordo County Dept. of  
Public Health  
Mason City, IA

Gwendolyn Williams  
Chicago, IL

Madeline Woodberry  
Sinai Urban Health Institute  
Chicago, IL