



National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

June 30, 2021

Dear Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the increased funding for the radon program and the lead categorical grant program. We would also like to acknowledge the president's budget request and its support for these programs at EPA, which is a step in the right direction towards the needed funding for these programs.

The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further demonstrated the connection between housing quality and health outcomes, how these impacts disproportionately affect specific populations including communities of color and low-income communities, and the necessity of investing in addressing healthy housing hazards and poor housing quality. As the country invests in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, significant funding is needed to increase housing affordability and stability, fix substandard housing, and provide innovative, flexible, and equitable services to those impacted by healthy housing hazards. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2022 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of these programs and increase funding to a total of \$110 million. This includes \$67 million for EPA's Categorical Grants for lead and radon, \$16 million for the Lead Risk Reduction Program, \$4 million for the Indoor Air Radon Program, \$15 million for the Reduce Risk from Indoor Air Program, and \$8 million for the Children and Other Sensitive Populations program.

EPA's Lead Categorical Grant and Lead Risk Reduction Programs are key to the nation's childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts. 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 work; and they ensure that consumers seeking lead inspection, abatement, and risk assessment services can find qualified, trained individuals to perform the work properly. Communities will require more resources to address the needs of lead-poisoned children. We urge Congress to increase funding of these programs to \$50 million and \$16 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 asthma triggers located in the home; mold, which is a particular concern in the aftermath of flooding; and radon. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. As awareness of radon as a public health issue has increased, the demand for radon mitigation services is also expected to increase. We urge Congress to increase the funding of these programs at \$17 million, \$4 million, and \$15 million, respectively.

EPA's Children and Other Sensitive Populations: Agency coordination 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. The incidence of asthma and several other chronic diseases is increasing nationwide. Therefore, more resources are needed to address the needs of these sensitive populations. We urge Congress to increase funding of this program to \$8 million.

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad coalition of over 400 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 should protect the most vulnerable citizens, children, and the elderly; this funding will help to accomplish that goal. These vital programs must be funded in order to support healthy housing for all.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your continued support of lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes. Our nation's children will benefit enormously from your leadership.

Please contact Sarah Goodwin at sarah@nshhcoalition.org if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Gillian Mittelsteadt
Co-Chair
National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
Issaquah, WA

Amanda Reddy
Co-Chair
National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
Columbia, MD

Organizational Signatures

National Organizations

Allergy & Asthma Network
American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology
Association of Asthma Educators
Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Enterprise Community Partners
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Resources in Action
Lead and Environmental Hazard Association
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of School Nurses
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Environmental Health Association
National Housing Trust
National NeighborWorks Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
ReFrame Foundation

State and Local Organizations

Boston Public Health Commission
EnviroPlan LLC
Holistic Health Educators, PMA
KeyUrban
Lincoln Westmoreland Housing
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
QA Lead Environmental Inc
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Reinvestment Partners
Tohn Environmental Strategies LLC
Tribal Healthy Homes Network
Yachad

Individual Signatures
Organization May Be Listed for Identification Purposes Only

John Adams
Program Leader - Outcome Broker
Cornell Cooperative Ext. Oneida Co.
& Lead-Free Mohawk Valley
Utica, NY

Stephanie Beebe
Lead Safe Coordinator
City of Toledo, Department of
Neighborhoods
Toledo, OH

Larissa Benjamin
Project Policy Analyst
UC Berkeley School of Public Health
Berkeley, CA

Carla Campbell, MD
Pediatrician (Retired)
Glenside, PA

Betty Cantley
Parent Advocate
Grafton, OH

Clifton Dennis
Pediatric Respiratory Therapist/Asthma
Educator
Children's Hospital of Georgia
Augusta, GA

Terry A. Greene, MS
Senior Environmental Health Consultant
John Snow, Inc.
Cambridge, MA

Paul Kowalski
Environmental Health Director (Retired)
New Haven, CT

Natalia Macias Correa
Content Creator Coordinator
Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance
Omaha, NE

Johanna Miller
St. Cloud, MN

Amy Murphy, MPH
Public Health Consultant
Amy Murphy Consulting
Milwaukee, WI

Prof. Donovan F. Robertson
CEO
CCSI Group
Brentwood, TN

Don Ryan
Director of Partnerships
Rebuilding Together Arlington/Fairfax/
Falls Church
Arlington, VA

Lynn Tait, PhD
Retired
ERC Lead
Tampa, FL

Pati Tomsits
Irvine, CA

David Turcotte
Research Professor
UMass Lowell & Asthma Coalition
of Greater Lowell
Lowell, MA