April 20, 2016 – via email

US Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Re: Outside Witness Testimony re US EPA Budget for FY 17

Dear Senators:

On behalf of more than 150 participating parent, public health, environment, and education groups in the Coalition, we urge you to make healthy children and healthy indoor environments a priority in the final FY17 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations. Specifically, we ask that you ensure that EPA’s Office of Children’s Health Protection and EPA’s Indoor Air and Radiation have $16 million over FY 16 enacted. It is a small sum which can lead to major improvements in the lives of small children in our nation’s PreK-12 schools.

Some 55 million children attend public and private schools every day, yet our nation’s schools – places where 20% of Americans who are 95% women and children learn and work every day – are woefully unaware or under-prepared to manage their facilities, as numerous studies on schoolhouse neglect have shown. Research also shows that environmentally healthy learning places that are clean, dry and quiet, and have good ventilation, have lower absenteeism and higher test scores.

As CDC and EPA both know, asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism, yet CDC’s 2012 School Health Policy and Practices key informant survey found too few states and districts with policies that are known to boost attendance and achievement:
- only 42.9% of states reported helping schools with Indoor Air Quality; and,
- only 36.3% of districts reported having a policy to purchase low-emitting products which reduce contaminants in indoor air.

We urge you to ensure that EPA’s Office of Children’s Health Protection receive $6 million over FY 16 enacted to advance children’s health and support its voluntary grants for state agencies and for pediatric environmental health services. And we urge that EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation/Indoor Environments (Reducing the...
Risks from Indoor Air) be allocated $10 million over FY 16 enacted for voluntary
grants to reduce children’s indoor exposures and asthma in homes, schools, and
child care centers, as well as to help schools’ address resiliency to severe weather
events.

Sincerely,

Alaska Community Action on Toxics
American School Health Association
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Association of School Business Officials International
Asthma Regional Council of New England
Center for Cities + Schools, University of California, Berkeley
Children’s Environmental Health Network
Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools
Empire State Consumer Project
Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana
Health Resources in Action
Healthy Schools Network
hellmuth + bicknese architects
Improving Kids’ Environment (IN)
Maryland Children’s Environmental Health Coalition
Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
Massachusetts Healthy Schools Network
Moms’ Clean Air Force
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies
National Education Association – Healthy Schools Caucus
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Parents for Students’ Safety (TN)
School-Based Health Alliance
Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute Trust (SMOHIT)
Take Care of Your Classroom Air (TX)
Toxics Information Project (RI)
Twenty-first Century Schools Fund
U.S. Green Building Council
West Harlem Environmental Action

For additional information:
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