



# Coalition *for* Healthier Schools

*...providing the national platform and  
the forum for environmental health at school, since 2001...*

Coordinated by Healthy Schools Network

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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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