



November 18, 2016

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

As you work toward a deal to fund the federal government for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY2017), the undersigned public health and medical organizations urge you to oppose all policy riders – including those that would block, weaken, or delay critical clean air and public health protections.

Clean air is essential for public health. Air pollution contributes to asthma attacks, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, low birthweight, and premature deaths. While the U.S. has made great progress in reducing dangerous air pollution, more than half of all Americans still live where levels of ozone and particle pollution are unhealthy to breathe. Continued implementation and enforcement of the Clean Air Act is a critical investment in the health of our nation.

Our organizations were glad to see that the Continuing Resolution passed in September was largely free of harmful policy riders. However, H.R. 5538, the FY2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives in July, contained numerous policy riders that would put health and lives at risk from air pollution, and slashed funding for EPA.

Riders in the House-passed bill would block carbon pollution limits on power plants; block methane limits on oil and gas facilities; delay more protective ozone pollution standards; weaken pollution standards for vehicles; circumvent scientific determinations about biomass; and much more.

Several additional egregious riders were added on the House floor, including provisions to prohibit any new major regulatory actions, no matter how great the need or how large the benefit to public health; block EPA's Clean Energy Incentive Program, which helps states encourage investment in clean energy and energy efficiency; and discourage citizen enforcement of environmental protections.

These riders would block or delay efforts to clean up harmful air pollution, leading to asthma attacks and deaths that could have been prevented. Children, the elderly, and people with lung and heart disease are at greater risk.

The undersigned organizations urge you to protect the health of your constituents by opposing all riders in bills to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY2017, including any provisions that would endanger public health by weakening the Clean Air Act or hindering the EPA's work to clean up harmful air pollution.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

American Thoracic Society

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Health Care Without Harm

March of Dimes

National Association of County & City Health
Officials

National Environmental Health Association

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Trust for America's Health