



Children's  
Environmental  
Health  
Network

April 9, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry  
Chair  
Foreign Relations Committee  
439 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman  
Chair  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee  
706 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Kerry, Lieberman and Graham:

The undersigned public health, environmental and science organizations strongly support legislative action to address the critical health impacts of climate change, which are being felt in communities across the country and the world. We thank you for your leadership in working together to craft comprehensive climate change legislation. We urge you to retain the important public health provisions and the funding allocation allowances to the Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Fund that were included in the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (S. 1733), and the House-passed American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (HR 2454).

Both the House-passed bill, as well as the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act, would require the Department of Health and Human Services to publish a national strategic action plan to assist health professionals in preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change on public health. This plan would be comprehensive and would include a variety of measures, such as enhancing disease surveillance systems; creating tools for predicting and monitoring the health effects of climate change; identifying and prioritizing vulnerable communities; developing centers of excellence for climate change and health; assisting with state, regional, tribal and local preparedness, communication and response plans; advancing climate and health research; and any other activities determined appropriate by the Secretary. The bills would also allocate 0.1 percent of revenue from the emission allowances established for each year to the Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Fund in order to support the activities described above. As you finalize your allocation decisions, we urge you to include this critical funding for the public health response to climate change.

We are very concerned about the human health effects of climate change. Global warming is expected to worsen many health problems, including heat and other weather-related illness and injury, diarrheal and other infectious diseases. Respiratory illness associated with pollution and allergens in the air may

be exacerbated. To help prepare for these challenges, we need to develop proactive global climate change preparedness strategies now. Yet, according to a national survey conducted last year by Environmental Defense Fund, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, and George Mason University, few public health agencies, which we rely on to protect us from infectious disease outbreaks and other health emergencies, have the resources to tackle this problem. In addition, an Association of State and Territorial Health Officials survey revealed that most state health officials have identified significant gaps in funding, staffing, and training to adequately deal with the challenges of climate change. We must ensure that public health agencies have the necessary resources to lead the health response to climate change and that the public is aware of the connection between climate change and health.

The effects of climate change are being felt in communities across the country and the world, and different communities and regions will continue to face distinct challenges. It is essential that our public health system is able to protect our communities from the effects of heat waves, wildfires, floods, droughts, infectious diseases, and other health impacts. By prioritizing the public health response to climate change and the protection of our most vulnerable communities, we can help avoid many preventable illnesses and deaths. Again, we thank you for your leadership and urge you to include in your legislation the funding for a comprehensive public health response to climate change. We look forward to working with you in the future to protect and promote the public's health.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Lung Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Rivers  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of Schools of Public Health  
Association of State & Territorial Health Officials  
Center for Climate Change Communication, George Mason University  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Edison Wetlands Association  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Health Data Organizations  
National Environmental Health Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Partnership for Prevention  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Public Health Institute  
Public Health Law & Policy  
Trust for America's Health  
Union of Concerned Scientists