



February 23, 2021

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski, Chair
California State Senate Budget Subcommittee 2
State Capitol, Room 4085
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom, Chair
California State Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3
State Capitol, Room 2003
Sacramento, CA 95814

In re: California Budget Investments in Zero Emission Transportation

Dear Chairs Wieckowski and Bloom:

On behalf of the American Lung Association, we are writing as the Legislature considers Governor Newsom's 2021-2022 budget proposals regarding public health, air quality, and climate investments. We are deeply aware that COVID-19 has placed tremendous hardships on Californians, exposing disparities and the urgency of addressing the multiple lung health crises facing Californians predating the pandemic. The American Lung Association recognizes that the budget process is critical to the state's efforts to improve lung health. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the budget and respectfully ask that the legislature prioritize funding to address critical air quality and lung health issues facing Californians today.

Largely due to the transportation sector, California is home to the most difficult air pollution challenges in the United States according to the American Lung Association's [State of the Air](#) 2020 report, and climate change is making the path to clean air more difficult. Air pollution disproportionately effects our most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and emerging evidence highlights the [links between air pollution and severe COVID-19 impacts](#). Poor air quality contributes to increased hospital and emergency room visits, premature death, asthma attacks, heart attacks, and other cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. According to the American Lung Association's [Road to Clean Air](#) report, the widespread transition to zero-emission transportation could yield up to \$22 billion in annual public health benefits in California. For those reasons, we support proposals to accelerate investment in zero-emission transportation and infrastructure, and community air protection programs, including:

Accelerating investment in Zero Emission Transportation Infrastructure:

The American Lung Association supports the proposed \$1 billion investment in zero-emission infrastructure based on the reauthorization and securitization of existing clean transportation funding programs as a critical opportunity to advance our clean air, climate, and health equity goals. Enacting this plan in 2021 is critical to setting the path to better health and cleaner air as we recover from the pandemic.

Prioritizing Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Heavy Duty Vehicles and Equity Programs:

The American Lung Association supports the priority areas outlined in Governor Newsom's proposals for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). Specifically, we are supportive of priority funding for zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicle technologies and increasing equitable access to the benefits of zero-emission transportation, including through the Clean Cars 4 All program. Early action on this funding is critical, as is the development of consistent, ongoing funding to maintain progress in eliminating combustion impacts on Californians, and especially those most impacted and vulnerable to transportation pollution.

AB 617 Community Protection Program:

The American Lung Association urges the Legislature to continue priority spending to reduce air pollution burdens in the state's most impacted communities through the AB 617 Community Air Protection Program. As the program implementation continues, and the roster of priority communities expands, we support high priority to ensure support for targeted monitoring and clean-up, community engagement and local implementation.

In closing, the American Lung Association appreciates your attention to the multiple, urgent, and ongoing lung health crises facing Californians. We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature and Governor Newsom to ensure the greatest possible investments to address harmful air pollution. Please don't hesitate to contact Will Barrett (william.barrett@lung.org) for additional information.

Sincerely,

Will Barrett
Director, Clean Air Advocacy