

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol Building, Rm 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol Building, Rm 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

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

Submitted via email

Re: May Budget Revision - Air Quality, Climate Change and Public Health

Dear Chairs Mitchell, Ting, Wieckowski and Bloom:

On behalf of the American Lung Association in California, I am writing in response to the May Revise budget proposal as it relates to air quality and transportation pollution. As a lung health organization, we greatly appreciate the difficult challenges facing all Californians and have committed significant resources to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the May Revise budget proposal, we see this challenge in stark terms.

While we focus on addressing the pandemic, we also remain committed to addressing the threats to lung health posed by poor air quality and climate change impacts. California's air pollution burdens pose a wide range of health impacts, including asthma attacks, heart attacks, thousands of premature deaths and increased susceptibility to respiratory infections. Early evidence suggests air pollution exposure may make people more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection and may increase the severity of the disease. These burdens are not felt equitably, with significant disparities in exposure to pollution in communities closest to major sources such as ports, warehouses, freeways and other diesel hot spots. For these reasons, we appreciate the focus on reducing pollution burdens in the May Revise, but are deeply concerned with proposals that would reduce clean transportation and other clean air programs.

The transportation sector dominates the inventory for unhealthy air and climate pollution in California. Over 80 percent of ozone-forming NOx emissions and 90 percent of toxic diesel particles come from transportation sources, as does roughly half of our climate pollution. Our brief comments on the May Budget Revision support the concepts of reducing transportation pollution, implementing Assembly Bill 617 to cut pollution in disadvantaged communities and ensuring Air Pollution Control Fund resources remain available to reduce air pollution.

Continued investment in low carbon transportation funding is critical to clean air progress.

Transportation is the leading source of harmful air and climate pollution in California, but the May Revise GGRF budget proposal may not result in any funding for key transportation programs. Vital zero emission vehicle incentives, equity-based transportation and the Clean Truck, Bus and off-road Freight Equipment programs fall into the non-priority category and may not be funded in the coming year.

- ***We urge you to support ongoing investment in cleaning up the transportation sector as an important complement to regulatory efforts to achieve health-protective clean air and climate standards.***

Implementation resources are needed to support success of the AB 617 Community Air Protection Program. We appreciate the focus and priority given to AB 617 incentives, but are concerned that funding for local air district implementation and community engagement may not materialize at all under the proposed GGRF structure. This structure creates the likelihood for gaps and delays in air district and community capacity for engagement in implementation.

- ***As the AB 617 program is expanding to protect health in additional communities, we encourage you to consider alternatives to unfunded implementation.***

Given the uncertainty surrounding the budget and potentially devastating cuts to clean air programs described above, we ask you to consider deferring GGRF decisions to later this summer.

Air Pollution Control Fund (APCF) resources should not be diverted away from clean air purposes. We are deeply concerned with the proposal to shift APCF away from California Air Resources Board to address budget gaps at other CalEPA agencies. The APCF is funded through the collection of penalties for violation of clean air rules and certification fees and should remain available to address air quality needs, including local implementation of AB 617 if GGRF funding is not going to be available.

- ***We urge you to develop a final budget that supports the critical work of CalEPA agencies without the diversion of APCF away from clean air programs.***

The American Lung Association's 2020 [State of the Air](#) report was released in April highlights the need for continued investment in clean transportation and local community protection.

- Nearly all Californians – 98 percent - live in counties impacted by unhealthy air.
- California is home to seven of ten most ozone-polluted cities in the United States, with Los Angeles, Visalia, Bakersfield, Fresno, Sacramento and San Diego ranked 1-6.
- Bakersfield tops the list for most impacted by unhealthy annual levels of particle pollution and is joined by five other California cities among the top ten.
- Fresno is home to the highest number of unhealthy particle pollution days in the United States, with four additional California cities among the top ten.
- Climate change is making the job of cleaning our air and protecting public health against ozone and particle pollution much more difficult.

While California has made impressive progress in cleaning our air and reducing climate pollution, there is a clear need for redoubling our efforts through strong standards and complementary investments. We urge your continued support for critical investments needed to protect lung health from the burdens of transportation pollution.

Sincerely,



Will Barrett
Director of Clean Air Advocacy

william.barrett@lung.org

916.585.7663