

May 11, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
U.S. House of Representatives
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Room H-305 Capitol

The Honorable Nita Lowey
U.S. House of Representatives
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building

The Honorable Ken Calvert
U.S. House of Representatives
Chair, Interior-Environment Subcommittee
2007 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Betty McCollum
U.S. House of Representatives
Ranking Member, Interior-Environment Subcommittee
2256 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

Our organizations write today to request that you oppose the proposed elimination of the Indoor Environments Division and the State Indoor Radon Grant program in the Trump Administration’s budget for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. To help save lives and protect the health of all Americans, we request that you maintain full funding for these programs in your appropriations actions.

Please oppose the proposed elimination of the EPA's Indoor Environments Division and the State Indoor Radon Grant program, and support full funding for these programs in your appropriations requests:

Program Area	Program Name	Budget Section	FY19 Request
Indoor Air and Radiation	Radon Program	Science and Technology	\$200,000
Indoor Air and Radiation	Radon Program	Environmental Program/Mgmt.	\$3,300,000
Indoor Air and Radiation	Reduce Risks from Indoor Air	Environmental Program/Mgmt.	\$14,000,000
Categorical Grants	State Indoor Radon Grant	State and Tribal Assistance	\$8,000,000

Radon Is the Second Leading Cause of Lung Cancer

As you may know, radon gas is a radioactive toxin that kills 21,000 people in the U.S. each year-- 55 Americans each day. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, a disease that kills more men and women than any other cancer, including breast and prostate. Radon is invisible, and present in more and more homes across the nation.

In 1988, President Reagan signed the Indoor Radon Abatement Act, which directed EPA to act to reduce radon levels so “that the air within buildings in the United States should be as free of radon as the ambient air outside of buildings.” Congress had passed that law in recognition of this serious health threat. EPA’s radon programs serve as the federal government’s primary line of defense for U.S. families against exposure to this pervasive carcinogen.

EPA’s Indoor Environments Division is a critical force in equipping the radon industry and public health programs with the technical and information tools they need to reduce radon exposure in homes, schools and other buildings. EPA’s Radon Program delivers radon standards and policies, including a radon reference, that ensure that all concerned with radon risk reduction are working according to proven evidence-based practices and policies. Fewer than half of the States license or in any way oversee the performance of radon services, and all but a few states rely heavily on the public-private partnership that EPA has forged with private companies and voluntary proficiency programs. Loss of the Indoor Environments Division would wipe out recent progress and reset the clock to before 1988.

EPA’s State Indoor Radon Grants enable state health departments, tribes, and others to implement radon programs best suited to their respective communities. These programs’ radon risk reduction efforts are

significant. Forty-five State radon programs and up to twelve tribal programs have relied and rely on SIRG to support radon awareness and education of our citizens. Many programs provide free or low-cost test kits for citizens in immediate need who cannot afford to test. Congressional direction in the appropriations report language for FY 17 has reinforced the essential role of these programs in reducing exposure in schools and reaching key health provider and building community stakeholders with well-targeting information about reducing exposure risk. These approaches deserve more time to reach peak effectiveness. Contrary to the implication in the narrative in the EPA proposed budget, these radon programs have much work to do and no alternative source of support for their work. Without federal grants, these programs will disappear within two years, even as the housing stock continues to grow, and more homes are added without radon-reducing features.

Indoor Air Can Threaten Health

In addition to radon, other indoor air pollutants cause serious harm to human health. Pollutants indoors vary greatly in their sources and in their health harms, ranging from volatile organic compounds in household products, mold, cockroaches, dust mites, and carbon monoxide, to damage caused by natural disasters such as flooding.

The Indoor Environments Division at EPA plays a crucial role in helping to protect those at greatest risk, including 6.1 million children with asthma. They spend most of their days indoors, in their homes and schools. The Division provides fair and reviewed information that helps parents, consumers and policy-makers make better choices to protect their indoor environments. They provide valuable guidance on reliable steps to reduce exposure and protect health, including distilling complex information to help make it more accessible and useful for multiple audiences.

These are not responsibilities that EPA can, or should, hand off to the states, contrary to EPA's argument in the proposed budget. States lack funding to conduct indoor air research, or to develop and implement programs.

The combined effect of eliminating these programs would subject the American public to much harm, including a lack of public information and resources; increased exposure to a radioactive gas; and increased exposure for consumers to fraudulent practices due to no agency providing leadership on radioactive measurement devices and forms of remediation for radon. As a result, more people will die from lung cancer caused by radon; more children will have asthma attacks; and more family members will have their health harmed by avoidable indoor air pollutants.

Please oppose the proposed elimination of the EPA's Indoor Environments Division and the State Indoor Radon Grant program and support full funding for these programs. Such action will affirm continued progress toward fulfilling the goal that indoor air should be as free of radon as outdoor air. Such action will help protect the lives and health of all Americans.

Sincerely,

**American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists
American Lung Association
Cancer Survivors Against Radon
Caring Ambassadors
Children's Environmental Health Network
Citizens for Radioactive Radon Risk Reduction**

**Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors
Lung Cancer Alliance
Lungevity Foundation
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Environmental Health Association**

May 11, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
U.S. Senate
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-128, The Capitol

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate
Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senate
Chair, Interior-Environment Subcommittee
522 Hart Senate Office Building

The Honorable Tom Udall
U.S. Senate
Ranking Member, Interior-Environment Subcommittee
531 Hart Senate Office Building

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Lowey, Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

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