

**Testimony of Stuart Spencer
President
Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies
U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Regarding Fiscal Year (FY)2019 Appropriations for the
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) State and Local Air Quality Management
Grants**

May 18, 2018

The Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA)¹ appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on the FY2019 proposed budget for U.S. EPA, including state and local air quality management grants under the State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) program. AAPCA's state and local air agency members believe that stable, adequate resources, including state and local air quality management grants funded at a level at least equal to FY2018, are critical to the continued implementation of core Clean Air Act activities.

The *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018* (H.R. 1625), passed on March 23 of this year, recognized the need for these investments in programs that support clean air. H.R. 1625 funded the STAG program at \$3.562 billion, with \$1.076 billion provided for categorical grants, including \$228.219 million for the State and Local Air Quality Management grant program, and \$75 million for the Diesel Emission Reductions Grant program (prior to rescissions).²

Grants to state and local air agencies, including under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act, fund essential activities related to planning, modeling, monitoring, training, developing emissions inventories and rules, permitting, inspections, and enforcing key elements of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), air toxics, and regional haze programs. State and local air agencies have found creative ways to amplify these federal grant resources to fulfill Clean Air Act mandates, and, through the framework of cooperative federalism, achieve significant success in virtually every measure of air pollution control.³

On February 12, the White House released the President's budget proposal for FY2019.⁴ The budget requests \$5.4 billion to fund U.S. EPA, an approximately 33-percent decrease from the appropriations omnibus that passed on March 23. The budget also proposes a nearly 45-percent reduction in categorical grants, or \$478.65 million less than enacted FY2018 levels. Further, U.S. EPA's FY2019 Justification of Appropriation Estimates for the Committee on

¹ AAPCA is a national, non-profit, consensus-driven organization focused on assisting state and local air quality agencies and personnel with implementation and technical issues associated with the federal Clean Air Act. AAPCA represents more than 40 state and local air agencies, and senior officials from 20 state environmental agencies currently sit on the AAPCA Board of Directors. AAPCA is housed in Lexington, Kentucky as an affiliate of The Council of State Governments. You can find more information about AAPCA at: <http://www.cleanairact.org>.

² H.R. 1625 – *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018* ([Public Law 115-141](http://www.congress.gov/public_laws/115/141)).

³ <http://cleanairact.org/documents/GreatestStory4-17-17.pdf>.

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/budget-fy2019.pdf>.

Appropriations shows the elimination of several air-related programs, including reducing state and local air quality management grants by more than 33 percent.⁵

AAPCA recognizes that your Subcommittee is in the early stages of the FY2019 appropriations process, and that H.R. 1625 did not adopt similar figures proposed by the Administration for FY2018. Congressional budgets for at least the past 15 fiscal years have recognized the need for stable, adequate funding for state and local air quality management grants. Since FY2008, funding for these grants has averaged nearly \$230 million, and the average year-to-year change has never been less than three percent.⁶

Instability in funding for key grant programs may affect each state or local air agency differently. Recent communication from the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) indicated that “As Categorical Grants make up on average 27% of state environmental agency budgets, decreases in these grants have significant impacts on the work that state environmental agencies are able to accomplish.”⁷ Providing stable, adequate funding for these grant programs through the appropriations process allows for state and local air agencies to continue the important and essential work that has driven success in air quality as well as provide stability for entities that rely on their expertise.

Thank you for the attention to this testimony. AAPCA and its members look forward to working with your Subcommittee as Congress develops its priorities for FY2019 appropriations. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jason Sloan, Executive Director, at jsloan@csg.org or (859) 244-8043.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart Spencer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stuart" being more prominent and the last name "Spencer" following in a similar style.

Stuart Spencer
Associate Director, Arkansas Department of
Environmental Quality
President, AAPCA

⁵ <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-02/documents/fy-2019-congressional-justification-all-tabs.pdf>.

⁶ Figures assume dollars not adjusted for inflation.

⁷ <https://www.ecos.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FY18-EPA-Budget-Letter.pdf>.