



**Testimony of the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies
Submitted to the
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Regarding
Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
State and Local Air Quality Management Grants**

June 10, 2022

The Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA)¹ appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the development of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). AAPCA's members are state and local air agencies that serve as co-regulators with U.S. EPA under the federal Clean Air Act and are responsible for designing, implementing, and enforcing air pollution control regulations that protect public health and the environment. As highlighted in a recent annual report from AAPCA,² state, local, and tribal air agencies, in coordination with U.S. EPA, have overseen remarkable progress in the nation's air quality, underscoring the Clean Air Act's core principle of cooperative federalism as a proven framework for approaching emerging environmental priorities.

As your Subcommittee undertakes the appropriations process for U.S. EPA, AAPCA specifically asks for state and local air quality management grants under the State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) program to be funded at levels that meet new and historic Clean Air Act requirements and allow maximum flexibility to agencies to determine the best use for addressing air pollution control needs in their jurisdiction. AAPCA also continues to reaffirm the importance of maintaining the granting authority for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) monitoring under Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, rather than the proposal by U.S. EPA's Office of Air and Radiation to transition to Section 105,³ which would necessitate that agencies match funds.

Congress funded the STAG program at \$4.352 billion under the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022* (H.R. 2471), which was signed into law on March 11, 2022.⁴ STAG funding in FY 2022 included \$231.391 million for state and local air quality management grants – nearly \$2 million above the FY 2021 enacted level – as well as \$92 million for diesel emission reduction grants and \$61.927 million for targeted airshed grants. Providing adequate funding and flexibility for grants under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act is critical for state and local agencies that are technical, planning, and jurisdictional experts and deeply engaged with their communities and stakeholders.

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. Created in 2012, AAPCA represents 48 state and local air pollution control agencies, and senior officials from 21 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: www.cleanairact.org.

² AAPCA, [State Air Trends & Successes: The StATS Report](#), April 19, 2022.

³ See page 31 of the [Draft FY 2023-2024 Office of Air and Radiation \(OAR\) National Program Guidance](#), open for comment through July 14, 2022.

⁴ H.R. 2471 – *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022* ([Public Law No: 117-103](#)). Funding levels prior to rescissions.

While STAG funds are a key budgetary component for state and local agencies, Clean Air Act mandates are ultimately met through strict budgeting, attentive programming, best practice development, and dedicated leadership and staff. Air agencies are responsible for a broad range of complex and technical efforts that support the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), air toxics, regional haze, and other Clean Air Act programs. These obligations span air quality planning and rule development, monitoring and modeling, emissions inventory management, permitting, inspections and enforcement, and hiring, training, and staff development. These frontline agencies must also undertake extensive efforts around public outreach and involvement, risk communication, exceptional events demonstrations, federal policy evaluation, and stakeholder engagement.

Further, state and local air agencies must also be responsive to increasing requirements from U.S. EPA and other fiscal challenges, often with ever-more-finite resources. A few abbreviated examples include:

- Crafting state implementation plans (SIPs) to meet current NAAQS and regional haze requirements as well as SIPs that will be required for more stringent NAAQS that are expected to follow the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, or CASAC, review of the standards for particulate matter (PM) and ozone.⁵
- Recognizing, evaluating, and communicating emerging environmental concerns, such as ethylene oxide (EtO), and integrating national priorities like environmental justice and equity into planning, permitting, and outreach efforts.
- Administering and maintaining the nation’s monitoring network, critical infrastructure that is central to ensuring that an area meets the NAAQS and community concerns are appropriately addressed.⁶
- Making sure that staff are well-trained to understand technically and socially complex issues, a necessity that is complicated by turnover and hiring challenges that can create expertise gaps.⁷

Federal grant flexibility is necessary as resource priorities evolve to meet these challenges. Air agency budgets, to an extent reliant on emissions fees from permitted sources, have been impacted by the successes that characterize air pollution control work. This includes revenue decreases from the Clean Air Act Title V Operating Permit program,⁸ which have declined due to the program’s pollutant fee structure and the program’s success in achieving its primary goal of reducing emissions to create better air quality.

Providing adequate funding for state and local air quality management grants and other STAG programs should also take into consideration the state of the current economy. Inflation, compounded by a slowed supply chain, has introduced new difficulties for air agencies in their on-the-ground work to

⁵ For a detailed example, please see AAPCA’s [request](#) to U.S. EPA to extend the comment period on the proposed “Federal Implementation Plan Addressing Regional Ozone Transport for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard,” (May 3, 2022).

⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office, [Air Pollution: Opportunities to Better Sustain and Modernize the National Air Quality Monitoring System](#), November 12, 2020 (publicly released December 7, 2020).

⁷ See AAPCA [comments](#) on the draft FY 2022–2024 content development plan for the National Air Quality Training Program (October 14, 2021).

⁸ U.S. EPA Office of Inspector General, [EPA’s Title V Program Needs to Address Ongoing Fee Issues and Improve Oversight](#), January 12, 2022.



protect the environment. This ranges from making tough fiscal decisions around programming to finding alternative solutions for unavailable monitoring equipment and parts.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony. AAPCA's members look forward to working with your Subcommittee as Congress develops its priorities for FY 2023 appropriations for U.S. EPA. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jason Sloan, Executive Director, at jsloan@csg.org or (859) 244-8043.

Sincerely,

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2022 President, AAPCA