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May 20, 2021

The Honorable Matt Cartwright  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2102 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Markey  
United States Senate  
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: *Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act (H.R. 3271/S.1702)***

Dear Representative Cartwright and Senator Markey:

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI) writes to thank you for reintroducing the *Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act*, which will assist health professionals and systems to prepare for and respond to the public health effects of climate change. We urge Congress to advance this significant legislation to improve patient outcomes through a coordinated national strategic action plan.

Established in 1943, AAAAI is a professional organization with more than 6,700 members in the United States, Canada and 72 other countries. This membership includes board certified allergist/immunologists, other medical specialists, allied health, and related healthcare professionals – all with a special interest in the research and treatment of patients with allergic and immunological diseases.

AAAAI believes the allergist/immunologist professionals sit at the front line of environmental health and must consider the larger implications of changing environmental conditions, including climate change, while adopting the best practices and newest research methods to anticipate the needs of patients.

AAAAI has long recognized how the impacts of climate change are relevant to direct patient care<sup>1</sup>. These impacts, including higher ambient carbon dioxide concentrations and warmer temperatures, increases the severity of chronic diseases, such as aspects of allergen exposure as well as communicable diseases related to allergies and asthma. We also recognize that certain groups

**(more)**

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<sup>1</sup> Barnes, C. et al. (2013, March). Climate Change and Our Environment: The Effect on Allergic and Respiratory Disease. *JACI: In Practice*. Retrieved from [https://www.jaci-inpractice.org/article/S2213-2198\(12\)00005-0/fulltext](https://www.jaci-inpractice.org/article/S2213-2198(12)00005-0/fulltext).

Poole, J. et al. (2019, May). Impact of weather and climate change with indoor and outdoor air quality in asthma: A Work Group Report of the AAAAI Environmental Exposure and Respiratory Health Committee. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. Retrieved from [https://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749\(19\)30281-7/fulltext](https://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749(19)30281-7/fulltext)

(including those with chronic diseases, children, older adults, minority and poor populations) are more vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change than others.

In relation to impacts to pediatric patients, recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a recent policy statement highlighting the health hazards of ambient air pollution to children and offered several recommendations to alleviate the potential adverse outcomes<sup>2</sup>:


*“Not only do health effects manifest as exacerbations of chronic diseases (e.g., asthma) but air pollution also appears to be associated with the development of major pediatric diseases, including adverse birth outcomes, abnormal lung and neurodevelopment, and pediatric cancer, as well as obesity and cardiovascular disease risk...Exposure and resultant health effects may be ameliorated most effectively through policy changes to reduce exposure across the life course.”*

The *Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act* will serve as a foundation for a coordinated federal agency effort directed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to better prepare for and respond to the public health crisis intensified by climate change. Better insight into how changing environmental conditions impact public health, including allergic diseases and immunological disorders, will ultimately lead to enhanced national policy decisions and improved patient care and health outcomes. Further, we appreciate the legislation’s focus on prioritizing communities harmed disproportionately by climate change due to environmental injustice. AAAAI supports efforts like this to enhance health equity across the healthcare system.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing legislation recognizing the important role health professionals and state and local health departments play in efforts to combat the public health impacts of climate change. AAAAI looks forward to working with you to advance the *Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act* in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

As issues related to how changing environmental conditions impact allergies, asthma, and immunological disorders arise, I encourage you to contact Sheila Heitzig, JD, MNM, CAE, AAAAI Director of Practice and Policy, at (414) 272-6071 or sheitzig@aaaai.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Giselle S. Mosnaim, MD, MS, FAAAAI  
President, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

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<sup>2</sup> Brumberg, H. et al. (2021, May). Policy Statement - Ambient Air Pollution: Health Hazards to Children. *Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*. Retrieved from <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2021/05/13/peds.2021-051484>