

Dear Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski,

We are writing to urge you to include \$100 million for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Air and Radiation/Indoor Environments Division to protect school children and personnel from unhealthy environments in schools and childcare facilities. We also request that you include an additional \$10 million for EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection to increase public health research services for children's environmental health.

As you know, school environmental health is an urgent need that demands a broad sustained response. Over twenty years of published research has shown that indoor environmental exposure to pollutants can be more intense than outdoor exposures and that school facilities have been neglected for decades. These are problems affecting children and their families/caretakers, particularly in communities most in need, and affecting personnel, the health care system, and schools themselves. Poor indoor environments in schools decrease seat time, attendance and test scores, and increase asthma and other health events, and thus increase health costs. It is clear that there is a significant need to educate, train, and encourage schools and childcare facilities on child-safe and effective preventive management of facilities.

EPA has the existing authorizations, programs, and expertise to conduct this work, but unfortunately has not received the necessary funding to do so. And while we appreciate the Biden Administration's efforts to dedicate significant resources to help low-income communities and their schools, utilization is below expected. Many educators lack sufficient knowledge about facilities and about these opportunities to take advantage of them, and the most rural and low-income schools cannot afford or even identify top facilities personnel or consultants to assess needs and devise plans for funding. Of the \$110 million requested for EPA, \$100 million should be dedicated to funding school-specific tools, technical assistance and other support for schools through EPA's Indoor Air Program. We urge that half of those funds be allocated to states, tribes, cities and NGOs to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to help school communities. This funding will improve monitoring and benchmark improvements to indoor environments, consistent with President Biden's Clean Air in Buildings Challenge. We also recommend the remaining \$10 million in funding be used for EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection to restore investment in Centers of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health (co-funded with NIEHS), support research on children's risks and exposures in school and child care facilities, and expand the national network of Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We recognize that there are many competing priorities facing you and we hope that you will support these small programs proven to support healthier children and better educational outcomes.

Include the text below at foot of the google doc

Deadline to sign is TUESDAY, March 28th.

Please email Theo Miller (Theo_Miller@gillibrand.senate.gov) and Mitchell Lee (Mitchell_Lee@gillibrand.senate.gov) with questions or to sign on.

Quill opt-in link can be found [here](#).