

# Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coalition

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December 3, 2007

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510-6175

Dear Chairman Boxer:

The undersigned public health organizations write to urge you to include strong provisions to address the public health consequences of climate change in any legislation considered by the Environment and Public Works Committee. We believe it is critical that Congress address this important public health issue as soon as possible.

Our organizations want to make it clear that climate change is a public health issue. From changes in vector borne diseases to impacts on drinking water supply to extreme weather events, we are already seeing the effects of climate change on the health of people across the globe. According to the World Health Organization, deaths from extreme heat, air pollution and infectious diseases are already occurring around the world. The public health community must be involved in every effort to not only mitigate the negative health effects of climate change, but also to adapt to those changes that are already occurring.

In order to address these and other public health impacts associated with climate change, it is critical that any legislation include:

- Language outlining the negative health effects of climate change;
- The participation of the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in surveillance, tracking and responding to the public health effects of changes in climate and weather;
- Specific interventions developed by the CDC, in coordination with representatives of the public health, climate and environmental communities to reduce the health risks accompanying climate change;
- Capacity building and training to enhance the workforce that is needed to participate in these activities at the national, state, and local levels; and

- Programs to educate the public, public health authorities, medical care givers, governments and local communities about the negative health consequences of climate change.

We believe that the public health community has a critical role to play in addressing both mitigation of climate change and adaptation to the negative public health effects that will result. But we must also ensure that our nation's public health workforce is educated about the impacts of global climate change. We believe that legislative proposals to address climate change should address both mitigation and the negative health consequences that are already taking place. Any legislation should support alternative energy use and decreased emissions and also healthy community design. Decreasing Americans' reliance on cars by creating more walkable and bikeable communities will decrease greenhouse gases and also has other health benefits, including decreased asthma rates and reduced obesity. We also strongly support efforts to provide our already over extended local, state and federal public health workers and agencies with the training and increased resources they will surely need to be able to address the public health challenges created by global climate change.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critical public health issue. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that the public health consequences of climate change are at the forefront of your discussions as you move forward in developing legislation to address this unique challenge. Please don't hesitate to contact any of our organizations if we can be of any assistance in that process.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Public Health Association  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
National Association of City and County Health Officials  
[Trust for America's Health](#)