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Executive Director

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The Honorable Lamar Alexander
US Senate Committee on Appropriations
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Subcommittee
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Fleishman
US House Committee on Appropriations
2410 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
US Senate Committee on Appropriations
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Subcommittee
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Simpson
US House Committee on Appropriations
2084 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Funding for NOAA's Air Resources Laboratory

Dear Honorable Senators Alexander and Van Hollen and Representatives Fleishman and Simpson:

The OTC, composed of twelve states and the District of Columbia, was established in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments to develop and implement regional approaches to reducing ozone levels. Our efforts have led to over twenty-five years of regional collaboration with clear positive impacts to the residents of our member states. Our multi-pollutant planning arm, the Mid-Atlantic Northeast Visibility Union has worked similarly to address regional fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and haze issues.

Based on our ample experience addressing ozone attainment and regional haze challenges it is vital to maintain the research tools that are used as the scientific backing to understand the complex airflows that transport ozone, PM_{2.5} and their precursor pollutants into our region.

This is a letter of support for the activities of NOAA's Air Resources Laboratory (ARL). As a member of the regulatory community we find their efforts on Air Quality Analysis and Forecasting as well as Atmospheric Transport and Dispersion (HYSPLIT) particularly valuable. ARL contributes in a major way to our missions to:

- Determine airflows that lead to ozone and regional haze pollution in our region so our members can adequately plan to reduce this pollution,
- Accurately predict ozone and PM_{2.5} levels to accurately warn residents of time periods when air is expected to reach unhealthy levels, and
- Provide researches with the tools they need to develop an accurate conceptual model of ozone and fine particulate matter pollution.

Our member states suffer under ozone episodes and need solid, science-based policy. ARL has been of enormous help in forecasting episodes to guide research aircraft flights lead by University of Maryland's Department of Atmospheric & Oceanic Science performed for the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). These observations and models in turn help improve numerical simulations to formulate the State Implementation Plans, or SIPs, drawn up by our individual member states.

The trajectory analysis HYSPLIT is an outstanding tool for analysis of field measurements and for chemical transport model evaluation. These help to quantify emissions of short-lived pollutants such as NO_x, ozone, aerosols (PM_{2.5}) and mercury. They indicate the origin of air and we have used them to analyze interstate transport of ozone and regional haze precursor pollutants.

In summary, the activities of ARL are enormously valuable to us for research into the atmospheric chemistry, air quality, and mesoscale meteorology that is necessary to solve the problem of unhealthy air quality levels in the Eastern United States. Please continue support to this vital effort.

Sincerely,



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CC: Senator Cortez, US Senate Committees on Energy and Natural Resources and Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
Senator Heller, US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
Senator Risch, US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,
Senator Cardin, US Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works,
Senator Corker, Tennessee,
Senator Crapo, Idaho,
Representative Hoyer,
Representative Kihuen,
Craig McLean, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research,
Gary Matlock, Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Labs and Programs,
David Holst, Acting Chief Financial Officer Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research,
OTC Air Directors