





The Honorable Robert Bonta, Chair

Assembly Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security Committee

P.O. Box 942849, Room 6005

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 185 (de León), Public Divestiture of Thermal Coal Companies Act – SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Bonta,

On behalf of the health and medical organizations below, we are writing to express our support for your Senate Bill 185 (SB 185) to divest California’s retirement programs from coal. Climate change is the defining health challenge of this century. While coal is not a major power source in California, our climate and health are deeply affected by its continued use.

Our organizations support the phase out of coal as the nation transitions to cleaner energy sources because of the severe health impacts on communities burdened by pollution from coal. Coal combustion also releases a toxic soup of chemicals - such as nitrogen oxides that contribute to smog, mercury, and particulate matter - that together damage the respiratory, cardiovascular, and nervous systems and contribute to heart disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, asthma, and chronic lower respiratory disease.

Additionally, coal combustion is the single largest contributor to climate change in the U.S. Human health risks associated with climate change include heat-related stress and illnesses, ozone pollution and other pollution-related respiratory and cardiac health impacts, wildfire smoke risks, vector-borne diseases, flooding and others. This bill would advance our public health and climate goals by requiring that California’s Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) and the State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS) liquidate their investments in publicly-traded companies that get more than 50% of their revenue from mining coal for use in generating electricity.

This bill will also help advance cleaner energy sources, thereby helping to protect Californians from the worst impacts of climate change. Our organizations also support an assessment of further divestment from other fossil fuels that contribute to health and climate damages.

As medical and health professionals committed to the strongest possible policies to fight air pollution and climate change, we support SB 185 as part of the important California Climate Leadership: Powering the New Economy package of climate goals passed by the Senate.

We look forward to working with you to ensure a healthier climate and a clean air future for California and for all communities affected by pollution from coal power.

Bonnie Holmes-Gen

Senior Director, Air Quality and Climate Change

**American Lung Association in California**

Kris Calvin

President & CEO

**American Academy of Pediatrics – California**

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**Health Care Without Harm**

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**Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)**

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**Sonoma County Asthma Coalition**

**Doctors for Climate Health**

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Karen Jakpor, MD, Riverside

David Pepper, MD, Contra Costa County