



March 1, 2016

The Honorable Grace Meng
United States House of Representatives
1317 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Meng:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals who champion the health of all people and communities, I write in support of H.R. 3384, the Quiet Communities Act.

Chronic environmental noise produces a wide variety of adverse health effects, including hearing loss, fragmented and disrupted sleep, cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, and increased blood pressure. Children are particularly vulnerable to noise, which can impair attention and memory, and subsequently affect language acquisition and learning. Additionally, low-income minority communities are exposed to more environmental noise pollution than other populations, potentially contributing to socioeconomic gaps in public health and education. Research demonstrates that lives can be saved from reducing noise and that the costs of enforcing noise regulations will be far less than the health care costs associated with heart disease, hearing loss and lost productivity.

The Quiet Communities Act of 1978 set the foundation for the creation of the Office of Noise Abatement and Control within the Environmental Protection Agency. Funding for ONAC was eliminated in 1982. H.R. 3384 would re-establish ONAC, an important step to improving noise control through the implementation of technical assistance programs, dissemination of information and educational materials and the creation of state and local noise control programs, thereby ensuring that all communities are protected from the harm of noise pollution.

Thank you for your commitment to reducing environmental noise pollution and promoting healthy communities for all.

Sincerely,

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director