



## AAP Headquarters

141 Northwest Point Blvd  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1019  
Phone: 847/434-4000  
Fax: 847/434-8000  
E-mail: kidsdocs@aap.org  
www.aap.org

## Reply to

### Department of Federal Affairs

Homer Building, Suite 400 N  
601 13th St NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202/347-8600  
Fax: 202/393-6137  
E-mail: kids1st@aap.org

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April 3, 2014

The Honorable Edward R. Royce  
2185 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel  
2161 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith  
2373 Rayburn H.O.B.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Karen Bass  
408 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Royce, Engel, Smith and Bass:

On behalf of the 62,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric subspecialists and surgical specialists dedicated to the health of all children through the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), I am writing to express our support for your efforts to address energy poverty through the Electrify Africa Act of 2013 (H.R.2548), which passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 27, 2014.

The AAP recognizes that the issue of energy poverty has great relevance to discussions of global health. The impact on children is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa, where seven in ten people do not have access to electricity.

Energy poverty is indirectly implicated in one of the world's leading killers of children: pneumonia, which is responsible for one fifth of deaths for children younger than five. In 2013, pneumonia claimed the lives of one million boys and girls.<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization reports that nearly half of those deaths are the result of particulate matter inhaled from indoor air pollution, a consequence of the fires and solid fuel-burning cook stoves used inside homes by three billion people worldwide. In total, indoor cooking fires and leaking stoves burning fuels like coal and wood contribute to two million deaths annually.<sup>2</sup>

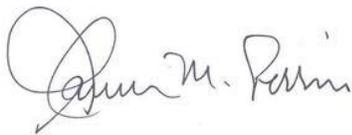
Pneumonia is only one of the results of energy poverty that affect children's wellbeing. For example, women give birth in hospitals without access to life-saving equipment like incubators and x-ray machines, risking the health of both mother and child. The lack of equipment to provide a continuous oxygen supply can make it impossible for hospitals to provide oxygen therapy for acute respiratory infections in young children, or for emergency surgical interventions. Unreliable electricity also compromises vaccine delivery, as many vaccines lose their effectiveness if they're exposed to extreme heat or freezing conditions. Vaccines require a "cold chain" of equipment and services from initial production to the last child who benefits from them, which can be impossible if electricity fails. Additionally, girls across the world often must spend hours each

day in the time-consuming task of searching for fuel, often a key reason why girls spend less time in school than boys. The lack of girls' education is associated with poorer long-term health and nutrition outcomes both for the girls themselves and their own future children.<sup>3</sup>

Your bill would address these problems by calling for the establishment of a comprehensive strategy to assist countries in sub-Saharan Africa to develop an appropriate mix of power solutions, including renewable energy, to provide sufficient electricity access to people living in rural and urban areas.

The AAP applauds your efforts to ensure U.S. government support for issues that directly bear on child and adolescent health. We look forward to supporting your efforts as the bill makes its way through the Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Peltz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "P".

/S/

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. "Pneumonia still responsible for one fifth of child deaths." Nov. 12, 2013. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/world-pneumonia-day-20131112/en/>.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. "Indoor air pollution and health." September 2011. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs292/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> World Food Programme. "Women and Hunger: 10 Facts." <http://www.wfp.org/our-work/preventing-hunger/focus-women/women-hunger-facts>.