

August 6, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Interior-Env. Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Rank. Mem, Interior-Env. Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman, Interior-Env. Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Rank. Mem, Interior-Env. Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Honorable Chairs and Ranking Members:

As you prepare the final Fiscal Year 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill, the undersigned members of the Friends of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) urge you to support \$80 million for NIEHS's Superfund Research program, as approved by the House Appropriations Committee.

Within the Interior-Environment Appropriations bill, the NIEHS's Superfund Program (SRP) supports research to address the health impacts from hazardous substances in the environment, develops clean-up technologies for hazardous waste, and advances new risk assessment methods. The SRP provides the scientific research used by the Worker Training Program (WTP) to train hazardous waste workers, to accelerate remediation efforts, and to prevent health consequences related to toxicant exposure. These programs have provided the safety tools and training to transform contaminated sites into new opportunities for residential, industrial, and commercial ventures – which means new jobs for the surrounding community and new sources of revenue for state and local governments.

The SRP's research portfolio and research findings include:

- ***Pregnancy Complications*** - Researchers at the University of Michigan revealed how exposure to Trichloroethylene (TCE), a widely used industrial chemical frequently found at Superfund sites as a contaminant in soil and groundwater, may have a negative impact on placental growth during pregnancy, which may affect the growth and wellbeing of the baby.
- ***ALS*** - Researchers at Dartmouth College found that high mercury levels in toenails are associated with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) risk. Mercury is number three on the ATSDR and EPA priority list of hazardous substances.
- ***Lung Cancer*** - Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania found that dietary flaxseed supplementation may be an effective strategy for reducing the risk of lung cancer induced by chemical exposures.
- ***Hurricanes*** - Researchers from Northeastern University are providing water infiltration kits and other support to its study participants in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The researchers are investigating links between the high

preterm birth rate on the island, 11.8% of live births, and the extent of hazardous waste contamination there. Puerto Rico has more than 200 contaminated sites that include 16 active Superfund sites.

- ***Groundwater Contaminant Removal*** - Researchers at University of California, Berkeley are developing a device for convenient on-site treatment to remove lead and arsenic from drinking water.

If the opportunity to meet the current investment needs of the NIEHS Superfund Research Program and the WTP is passed by, we risk reversing a variety of public health, environmental, and economic gains of the past 25 years. The sequester followed by flat funding for the last five years has meant that very deserving research and training plans have not been supported. Due to flat funding, for example, approximately 25% of hazardous waste and emergency response training has gone unfunded, meaning our communities are more exposed to public health harm when disaster strikes. Again, we urge you to support the House funding level of \$80 million for the NIEHS Superfund Research Program in the final FY2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
Birth Defect Research for Children
Children's Environmental Health Network
Endocrine Society
Green Science Policy Institute
Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc.
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lupus Foundation of America
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies, Inc.
National Environmental Health Association
Society for the Study of Reproduction
Society of Toxicology
Teratology Society
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research