

Friends of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

July 25, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Labor-HHS-ED Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair, Interior-Env. Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Labor-HHS-ED Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member, Interior-Env. Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Baldwin and Merkley, and Ranking Members Capito and Murkowski:

Thank you for your leadership on funding support for biomedical research and public health. As you consider the FY2024 Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies (L-HHS) and the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies (Int-Env) appropriations bills, the Friends of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) write to express our strong support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the NIEHS.

We appreciate that the FY2024 appropriations process faces significant constraints given the funding levels set in the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* (P.L. 118-5); however, we assert that cuts to critical health research programs at NIH/NIEHS would have severe and lasting effects on the nation's public health. Both the L-HHS and Int-Env portions of NIEHS' funding include valuable research projects that create opportunities for individuals and populations to prevent disease and improve overall health. These programs require sustained, predictable investment to ensure that long-term goals and objectives can be prioritized and realized through rigorous research.

The L-HHS portion of NIEHS-funded research has delivered foundational results that advance national priorities, including maternal and children's health. NIEHS-funded research provides insights on how pregnant women and children are uniquely vulnerable to hazardous exposures, and how these exposures lead to chronic conditions in children such as obesity, asthma, and neurodevelopmental disorders. NIEHS has also led the way in our understanding of how early-life exposures are correlated with life-long consequences, also known as the developmental origins of health and disease. Research results are also able to be translated into action; the new Collaborative Centers on Children's Environmental Health Research and Translation aim to deliver actionable steps to move evidence-informed CEH research findings to the broader community. Cuts to the L-HHS budget would threaten the long-term success of these and other impactful children's health programs.

The Int-Env portion of NIEHS' budget provides complementary and similarly vital information and resources. For example, the Worker Training Program Environmental Careers Worker Training Program (ECWT) has a proven record of delivering a strong return from a relatively

modest investment. A recent study found that a \$3 million annual investment led to an added value of approximately \$1.79 billion from 1995 through 2013, or roughly \$100 million annually. Additionally, the same study found that the ECWT saved the government roughly \$40 million annually over the same time. We note that the ECWT program has been recognized by the Justice40 Initiative for its strong track record of helping unemployed, underemployed, homeless, and formerly incarcerated people find good jobs and become productive members of society.

These are just two of many examples of programs and projects that would be affected if significant pressures were placed on the NIH budget. We urge you to protect the important contributions of NIEHS research teams across the country by maintaining a steady, sustainable, and predictable budget for NIH and NIEHS in FY2024.

Sincerely,
Joe Laakso & Valerie Adelson
Co-Chairs, Friends of NIEHS