

American Academy of Pediatrics • American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association • American Thoracic Society • Association of Public Health Laboratories • Birth Defect Research for Children • Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (formerly Breast Cancer Fund) • Children's Environmental Health Network • Endocrine Society • Environmental Working Group • Green Science Policy Institute • Healthy Schools Network • Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc. • Learning Disabilities Association of America • Lupus Foundation of America • The Myositis Association • National Center for Environmental Health Strategies • National Environmental Health Association • Society for Occupational and Environmental Health • Society for Women's Health Research • Society of Toxicology • The Honest Company • The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research • West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT)

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March 13, 2017

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 Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2018 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill, the undersigned members of the Friends of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) would like to call your attention to the vital work being carried out by the NIH/National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) as a result of the annual appropriation provided for this work in the Subcommittee's bill.

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 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:

- Research by the SRP grantees at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine, involving carbon tetrachloride-induced chronic liver injury led to the discovery of cells responsible for regenerating liver tissue and could potentially lead to an effective treatment of steatosis and steatohepatitis in the liver, which may affect more than 40 million Americans.

- SRP researchers at Duke University are investigating ways to use naturally occurring cellulose nanomaterials for water treatment technologies, which are much more affordable and less energy-intensive than many other current technologies.
- SRP scientists at the University of California, Davis determined the molecular mechanism underlying the beneficial effects of inhibiting an enzyme after heart attacks, opening the door for a new therapy to stop cardiac fibrosis.
- Recently in Alaska, the WTP delivered 61 courses for 1,019 workers in remote areas that filled critical hazardous material and emergency response training gaps such as those in Goodnews Bay, Togiak, Manokotak, and an association of the Native Villages in the Bering Straits Region.
- During a train derailment and evacuation in Marysville, TN, WTP training helped workers at Blount Hospital ensure that no staff members were exposed to hazardous chemicals, patients were safe, and contaminants were kept outside the buildings.

We ask for your leadership in ensuring that the NIH/NIEHS Superfund-related activities receive an increase of \$1.5 million in the Fiscal Year 2018 bill, which will help to keep our air, soil, and water safe. Additionally, the Subcommittee's investment in NIEHS funding creates private sector jobs and bolsters the economy. If the opportunity to meet the current investment needs of the NIEHS Superfund Research Program and Worker Training Program 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 three 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. Representatives from this diverse coalition would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about the very important work being carried out by NIEHS.

Sincerely,

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 Society for Occupational and Environmental Health  
 Society for Women's Health Research

Society of Toxicology  
The Honest Company  
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March 13, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman, Labor-HHS-ED Subcm.  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Labor-HHS-ED Subcm.  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your leadership on biomedical research and public health. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2018 Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies appropriation bill, the undersigned members of the Friends of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) ask you to provide at least \$2 billion above the final fiscal year 2017 level still pending for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We urge Congress to sustain, not curtail, the innovative biomedical research pipeline that generates prevention strategies, treatments and cures for diseases affecting millions of Americans. Included as part of our overall recommendation for the NIH, we ask you to provide \$735 million for the NIEHS in FY2018.

The NIEHS plays a unique role within the NIH. It is the leading institute conducting research to prevent human illness and disability by understanding how the environment influences the development and progression of human diseases and illnesses such as cancer, autism, asthma, Parkinson's disease, autoimmune diseases and chemical sensitivities. NIEHS research encompasses all types of exposures that can impact human health, including air pollution, endocrine disruptors, nanomaterials, and other contaminants. NIEHS-funded researchers are also advancing our understanding of complicated scientific issues related to exposure research, such as the effects of mixtures, biomonitoring, and developmental vulnerability. The results of NIEHS research provide policymakers with essential, unbiased science to support informed decision-making affecting our health.

The Institute's studies have been instrumental in advancing our new knowledge about the causes of cancer, including the discovery of the first breast cancer susceptibility gene. More recently, by studying blood samples from women in the NIEHS Sister Study, NIEHS epidemiologists have discovered how certain gene modifications, called methylation, in blood cells differ between women who have breast cancer and women who remain cancer free. This research has revealed

how a technique called “blood methylation profiling” holds the potential for early breast cancer detection and risk prediction.

Children are uniquely vulnerable to harmful substances in their environment, and the NIEHS plays a critical role in uncovering the connections between environmental exposures and children's health. Today's pediatric health challenges include chronic conditions such as obesity and asthma and neurodevelopmental disorders including learning disabilities and autism. For all of these health challenges, the environment plays a role in the cause of the disease, the ability to prevent the disease, or the effectiveness of efforts to mitigate the disease consequences. Recent NIEHS funded studies have shown that exposure to traffic-related air pollution (nitrogen dioxide, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>) during pregnancy and the first year of life may be associated with the development of autism. Additional research on likely biological pathways is needed to determine whether these associations are causal.

Using new imaging techniques, NIEHS-funded researchers recently discovered how environmental exposures including ultraviolet exposure and chemical compounds in paint, plastics and other consumer products can damage human DNA. These changes result in cell death which may lead to cancer, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular and lung disease and Alzheimer's disease.

In June 2010, the Director of NIH, Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., asked the NIEHS to lead a study on the health of the workers and volunteers most directly involved in responding to the Gulf oil spill crisis. The NIEHS immediately began working with Gulf communities, as well as agencies, researchers, and outside experts, to design the study. More than 32,000 people from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and other areas have enrolled in the study. The long-term health study will help determine if oil spills and exposure to crude oil and dispersants affect physical and mental health.

The NIEHS is poised to generate many new exciting discoveries about the impact of environmental factors on human health. We therefore ask you to provide **\$735** million for the NIEHS in the FY2018 Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation.

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