

October 22, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin Chairman  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Obey and Ranking Members Cochran and Tiahrt:

As you consider funding levels for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations measure, the undersigned groups respectfully request that you prioritize funding for public health programs, including environmental public health programs.

There is a connection between environmental hazards and the incidence and distribution of chronic disease. Environmental hazards have been linked to birth defects and diseases, such as asthma and certain forms of cancer. Information obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Environmental Health Laboratory and the Environmental and Health Outcome Tracking Network helps public health officials to determine which population groups are at high risk for exposure to environmental contaminants and adverse health effects, assess public health interventions, and monitor exposure trends over time. We request that you:

- Include the House-passed level of **\$43,729,000** for the **Environmental Health Laboratory**, which includes funding for biomonitoring, direct measurements of people's exposure to toxic substances. The increase provided for the Environmental Health Laboratory in the FY 2009 omnibus (for a total program level of \$42,735,000) enabled CDC to award funding to states to assess residents' exposure to chemicals by determining which environmental chemicals people have been exposed to and how much of those chemicals are in their bodies. Thirty-three states applied for funding either individually or in partnership with other states, and CDC was able to fund just three states. Additional funding is needed to support CDC's efforts to provide quality assurance, training and technical assistance to states and to continue the expansion of state biomonitoring efforts.
- Include the House-passed level of **\$33,124,000** for the **Environmental and Health Outcome Tracking Network**. Earlier this year, CDC launched the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, a surveillance tool that scientists, health professionals, and now members of the public can use to track environmental exposures and chronic health

conditions. In 2008, CDC was able to fund just 16 states and one city to participate in this program. Their projects have led to 73 public health actions to control potential illnesses from environmental exposures. With the additional funding provided in the FY 2009 omnibus, (for a total program level of \$31,143,000) CDC was able to add six additional states to the network. The increased funding proposed in the House bill would enable CDC to support the continued growth of the Network so that across the country, we will be able to make better environmental health decisions and help prevent chronic illnesses.

We request your support in ensuring that this funding is included in the final enacted FY 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations measure. We look forward to working with you on this and other important public health initiatives in the future.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Better Children's Diets  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Public Health Association  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Breast Cancer Fund  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Coalition For A Safe Environment  
Colorado Director's of Environmental Health  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Farmworker Justice  
Long Beach Coalition For A Safe Environment  
Migrant Clinicians Network  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Environmental Health Association  
National Research Center for Women & Families  
Oregon Department of Human Services, Public Health Division  
Tennessee Department of Health, Environmental Epidemiology Program  
Trust for America's Health  
Virginia Environmental Health Association