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March 14, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair, 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

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2020 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:

- ***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. Additional research is needed to explore and confirm these findings.
- **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 18 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.

We ask for your leadership in ensuring that the NIH/NIEHS Superfund-related activities receive an increase of \$5 million (6.4%) in the Fiscal Year 2020 bill to a total of \$84 million, 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 in recent years prior to fiscal year 2019 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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American Geophysical Union
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Birth Defect Research for Children
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (formerly Breast Cancer Fund)
Childrens 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
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies
National Environmental Health Association
Society for Occupational and Environmental Health
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