

American Academy of Pediatrics • American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association • 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 • 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 • March of Dimes • The Myositis Association • National Center for Environmental Health Strategies • National Environmental Health Association • Society for Occupational and Environmental Health • Society for the Study of Reproduction • Society for Women's Health Research • Society for Birth Defects Research & Prevention • Society of Toxicology • The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research • West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT)

February 26, 2020

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

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

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member and Cole:

Thank you for your leadership on biomedical research and public health. As you consider the FY2021 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 \$44.7 billion 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 **\$860.3 million for the NIEHS in FY2021.**

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, chemical intolerance or toxicant-induced loss of tolerance, 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 biomonitoring, developmental vulnerability, and the effects of chemical mixtures. 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. In 2019, the

NIEHS Sister Study found that women who use chemical hair dye and chemical hair straighteners have an increased risk of breast cancer, particularly black women. The study results suggest that chemicals in hair products may play a role in breast carcinogenesis. The Sister Study is a national cohort of 50,000 sisters of women who have had breast cancer.

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, asthma and neurodevelopmental disorders including learning disabilities and autism. NIEHS research is critical, since children have unique susceptibility to toxicants due to their ongoing development and face higher rates of exposure to contaminants than adults by virtue of their developmentally-appropriate behaviors. A recent NIEHS-funded study found fewer new asthma cases and an up to 20% lower rate of asthma after air quality improvements, including reductions in nitrogen dioxide and PM2.5, were made. The Southern California Children's Health Study studied new onset cases of asthma in over 4,100 children in the Los Angeles, California area before, during and after air quality improvements.

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.

Since 2010, the NIEHS has been studying the health of the workers and volunteers most directly involved in responding to the Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil spill. Approximately 33,000 people from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and other areas have participated 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 \$860.3 million for the NIEHS in the FY2021 Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,

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Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc.

Green Science Policy Institute
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lupus Foundation of America
March of Dimes
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies
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