

American Academy of Pediatrics • American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association • American Lung Association • American Thoracic Society • Arthritis Foundation • Association of Public Health Laboratories • Breast Cancer Fund • Children's Environmental Health Network • Environmental Defense Fund • Environmental Working Group • Healthy Schools Network • Learning Disabilities Association of America • Lupus Foundation of America • National Center for Environmental Health Strategies • National Eczema Association • Society for Women's Health Research • Society of Occupational and Environmental Health • Society of Toxicology • Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation • The Endocrine Society

April 5, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Labor-HHS-ED Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Labor-HHS-ED Subcm.
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

Thank you for your leadership on biomedical research and public health. As you consider the FY2013 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 an appropriation of \$32 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We urge Congress to sustain, not curtail, the innovative biomedical research pipeline into prevention, treatments and cures for diseases affecting millions of Americans that has been generated. Within our recommendation for the NIH, we ask you to provide **\$717.7** million for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) in FY2013.

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, other autoimmune diseases and chemical sensitivities. The results of NIEHS research provide policymakers with essential, unbiased science on which to base decision affecting our health.

The Institute's studies have been instrumental in our new knowledge about the causes of cancer, including the discovery of the first breast cancer susceptibility gene. Recently, NIEHS scientists discovered a potential new avenue for cancer therapies through their study of epoxyeicosatrienoic acids (EETS), small molecules that promote the spread of cancer through their support of blood vessels that feed tumors. Blocking the production of EET's and stopping the growth of blood vessels may serve to prevent the further spread of cancer in the body.

American competitiveness depends on having healthy educated children who grow up to be healthy productive adults. Yet, growing numbers of our children are diagnosed with

chronic and developmental illnesses and disabilities. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that toxic environmental exposures play a role in 28 percent of neurobehavioral disorders in children and this does not include other conditions such as asthma or cancers. 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.

The NIEHS is conducting the largest study ever on the health effects of oil spills and exposure to dispersants through the GuLF Study (Gulf Long-term Follow-up Study). The GuLF study will enroll 55,000 workers and volunteers throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida who were involved in the Gulf oil spill cleanup. NIEHS provided safety training to 140,000 cleanup workers immediately following the Gulf oil explosion.

NIEHS's National Toxicology Program (NTP) is the leading federal program studying the toxicity of environmental agents in our environment. Recently, the NTP began a collaboration with the EPA, NHGRI and FDA to test 10,000 chemicals for potential toxicity, including those in consumer products, food additives and drugs using a high-speed robotic screening system. This new chemical screening system has the potential to revolutionize the assessment of new environmental chemicals and the development of new drugs.

The NIEHS is poised to generate many new exciting discoveries about the impact of environmental factors on human health. We ask you to provide **\$717.7** million for the NIEHS in the FY2013 Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,

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