

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Simpson and Merkley and Ranking Members Pingree and Murkowski:

The undersigned public health, medical and environmental health organizations urge you to provide at least \$100 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry in the FY 2024 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

ATSDR establishes and maintains effective relationships with people in communities that are impacted by environmental hazards throughout the nation. ATSDR assists these communities by investigating and addressing the health concerns resulting from environmental hazards. ATSDR's environmental health expertise, regional locations, and ability to respond 24/7 enables the agency to respond to and address environmental health threats from chemical spills and other emergencies at a moment's notice. ATSDR responded to the recent train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, providing support to the health departments in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The agency is conducting an Assessment of Chemical Exposure investigation to assess the impact of the chemical release on individuals as well as the community. Last year, ATSDR also provided critical support to the Hawaii Department of Health to survey people affected by the fuel releases in the U.S. Navy's Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam drinking water system. In the past several years, ATSDR responded to more than 1,400 community, state, and federal requests, addressing the potential health risk of over five hundred thousand people around the country. The agency also educated over 29,000 health professionals on ways to diagnose and treat conditions related to hazardous exposures. ATSDR is conducting groundbreaking work to address emerging contaminants, such as a multi-site health study that will look at the relationship between exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and human health and developmental effects. This study builds upon ATSDR's exposure assessments at ten sites that are identifying factors that affect PFAS exposure in communities. The exposure assessments have included over 2,300 participants, assessed over 1,300 households and reached over 150,000 people through social media.

As a result of funding increases since FY 2020, ATSDR has increased the number of states funded through the ATSDR Partnership to Promote Local Efforts to Reduce Environmental Exposure (APPLETREE) cooperative agreement to 28. Sixteen recipient states received an additional \$1.4 million in COVID-19 supplemental funding through APPLETREE to provide guidance and community engagement on safe practices for disinfection for home, school, and early learning education centers. The APPLETREE program expands the environmental health capacity in state health departments, allowing them to do critical work to identify if and how people are exposed to

hazardous substances and make recommendations to prevent and address those exposures. For example, APPLETREE support enabled the Illinois state health department to conduct an investigation into potential excess cancer deaths associated with exposure to ethylene oxide in a nearby sterilization facility. ATSDR is also expanding state environmental health capacity by developing geospatial tools and other resources that states can use to address hazardous exposures.

ATSDR also provides vital support to advance children's environmental health. The agency provides environmental health education to public health professionals, clinicians, community members and others. ATSDR also supports ten Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units that advise parents and pediatric health providers on protecting and caring for children potentially exposed to harmful chemicals. In addition to the thousands of trainings conducted, PEHSUs have provided over 1,000 consultations benefitting nearly 2,500 health professionals, parents, and community members. PEHSUs provide a vital role because most healthcare professionals do not receive proper training to recognize, manage, treat, and prevent environmentally related conditions in children.

We urge you to support a request of at least \$100 million for ATSDR in FY 2024. This would significantly enhance the agency's ability to respond to emergencies, community requests for assistance, fund state and local health departments and protect the nation's health.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition
Children's Environmental Health Network
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
GO2 for Lung Cancer
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
National Environmental Health Association
National League for Nursing
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National WIC Association
The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Trust for America's Health