



720 South Colorado Blvd.
Suite 1000-N
Denver, Colorado 80246-1926
Phone (303) 756-9090
Fax (303) 691-9490
www.neha.org

December 9, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Inouye and Rogers and Ranking Members Cochran and Dicks:

On behalf of the undersigned public and environmental health organizations that strongly support the many critical public and environmental health programs funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we write to express our particular concerns regarding the proposed budgetary reductions to the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) in the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill and the draft House proposal.

We firmly believe that these reductions will adversely affect the ability of environmental health programs at the federal, state and local levels to provide long standing and highly valued basic and essential services that positively impact population health. NCEH programs address many critical environmental health issues facing our nation today including asthma, lead poisoning, the health impacts of community design, and climate change. They also serve to unravel the relationships between environmental contaminants and various diseases that are emerging in our communities. NCEH funding, programmatic work, technical assistance, leadership, and expertise immeasurably enables environmental health practitioners at the national, state, and local levels to understand and adopt best practices, use modern technologies and approaches to problem solving, build professional networks, and acquire the education and training that is necessary for the effective performance of their vital part of the public health system.

In general, the cost to operate and maintain environmental health programs is modest. NCEH funding represents a significant portion of the federal funding for these programs at the state and local level. In addition, NCEH's assistance plays a significant role in the ability of many communities in our nation to provide vitally important core environmental health services. *These services – that aim to prevent costly health issues from emerging – help to assure communities that they have a cost effective, prevention based public health system.*

NCEH programs build the capacity of the public health system and advance prevention. Prevention translates into reduced levels of illness, injury and death, and significant health care savings. The savings from these programs makes environmental health one of our nation's most prudent investments.

The proposed cuts to NCEH programs will undermine the vital role it plays in protecting the health of the public from environmental hazards. We therefore urge you to consider reversing the proposed cuts and – at a minimum – maintaining the current levels of funding that exist for NCEH.

Thank you for your attention to our comments in support of NCEH's many valued programs.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
Association of Public Health Laboratories
American Thoracic Society
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Center for Public Health and Climate Change
Children's Environmental Health Network
Magellan Bio-Sciences
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Environmental Health Association
Public Health Institute
Trust for America's Health

