

February 20, 2025

Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair, House Appropriations
Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC

Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC

Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin and Ranking Members DeLauro and Capito;

As Congress moves forward with the fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations process, our association would like to emphasize the critical importance of efforts performed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) that enable state and local environmental health agencies to provide a safe, healthful environment for your constituents.

State, local, tribal and territorial environmental health agencies perform the services necessary for every community to provide a safe, healthful environment. These agencies ensure that our food is safe, that our water is drinkable, that the air is breathable, and that wastewater is eliminated. These agencies provide the fundamental services required for robust and sanitary communities that are attractive for businesses and residents.

The federal government funds, mainly through CDC's NCEH, research and workforce development that supports these state and local environmental health agencies efforts to combat emerging and continuing environmental health threats.

CDC's NCEH performs vital research and funds the state & local environmental health agencies, including:

- **Enhancements to the Environmental Health Workforce & Environmental Public Health Workforce Development** - Environmental health is profoundly local. The majority of the activities to protect the public from environmental threats are undertaken by the local

environmental health workforce. CDC's NCEH invests in the environmental health workforce through workforce development, data modernization, recruitment and training.

- **Food Safety & Foodborne Outbreaks** - CDC's NCEH invests in state & local environmental health departments by strengthening foodborne illness outbreak investigations skills and capacity, as well as promoting enteric disease surveillance and response activities.
- **Assisting residences served by Private Drinking Water** - Research conducted by CDC's NCEH identifies recent waterborne disease threats (such as PFAS), providing state & local agencies the necessary information on how private water users can reduce health threats from these diseases.
- **Rural Public Health Training Curriculum** - Rural America lacks the resources necessary to recruit and train talent. CDC's NCEH invests in training in rural public health competencies for the environmental health workforce.

Elimination of CDC's NCEH will lead to:

- **Loss of Critical Funding** – CDC's NCEH strengthens state and local environmental health capacity to prevent and respond to environmental hazards. Without CDC funding, states and localities will face challenges in detecting, preventing, and responding to environmental health threats, leading to increased risks of waterborne diseases, foodborne outbreaks, and other public health crises.
- **Adverse Public Health Consequences:** The loss of capacity by environmental health programs will result in slower responses to toxic exposures, unsafe drinking water, food contamination, and other environmental-related health threats such as extreme heat, flooding, and wildfires. Communities at great risk of environmental health exposures and hazards will face increased illness, hospitalizations, and long-term health effects.

CDC's NCEH addresses emerging environmental health risks and responds to environmental health emergencies by developing tools, guidance, and trainings; disseminating best practices; and providing expertise and requested technical assistance on environmental health concerns. CDC provides expertise and guidance relied on by other federal, state, tribal, local, and territorial partners, including extreme heat, wildfires and hurricanes; cancer cluster investigations; chemical exposures related to the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio; potential chemical, radiological, nuclear, or explosive mass casualty events; and safe drinking and recreation waters that are free from contaminants that can cause waterborne illness.

NCEH performed all these services for \$229 million in FY 2025. For FY 2026, NCEH is requesting \$249 million, of which \$17 million comes from the Public Health Trust Fund.

On behalf of NEHA and state, local, tribal, and territorial environmental health agencies in general, please support this modest request to ensure communities in this country remain safe from environmental health threats.



If you have any questions, please contact our Director of Government Affairs Doug Farquhar at dfarquhar@neha.org.

In health,



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