

May 9, 2025

Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
Labor, Health & Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
Labor, Health & Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
Labor, Health & Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
Labor, Health & Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

### **NEHA's Position Statement on CDC's National Center for Environmental Health**

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) represents more than 7,500 government, private, academic, and uniformed services sector environmental public health professionals in the U.S., its territories, and internationally. This workforce represents the second largest constituency of the existing public health workforce, second only to nursing. NEHA is the profession's strongest advocate for excellence in the practice of environmental public health. We deliver on our mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental public health workforce.

### **Chairs and Ranking Members;**

In the effort to streamline the federal government, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) has been slated has been slated for dissolution from the Trump Administration's proposed FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The NCEH Laboratory and some functions of the Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice (DEHSP) have remained, but the majority of programs have been eliminated, including lead poisoning prevention, asthma and environmental health tracking. Funding for the CDC's NCEH in FY 2025 came to \$224 million, which represents a bare minimum for the NCEH to perform these services. It has been reduced to \$96 million in the FY 2026 budget, with \$70 million being dedicated to the lab and \$26 million for environmental health programs.

NCEH plays a vital role in the U.S. public health system by providing national leadership in emergency response, environmental disease tracking and surveillance, air quality, climate resilience, drinking water safety, and lead poisoning prevention. They alone support

environmental health programs in state, local, tribal and territorial health departments. dissolving this center significantly weakens the country's ability to respond to environmental hazards, disproportionately harms vulnerable populations, and threaten decades of progress in protecting public health.

The federal government funds, mainly through CDC's NCEH and its DEHSP, research and workforce development that supports these state and local environmental health agencies efforts to combat emerging and continuing environmental health threats. They provide the public health research on drinking water, in particular private drinking water not covered by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). They perform research on wastewater, providing guidance to the states and locals on health threats from septic systems. They work with the FDA on foods, providing research on foodborne outbreaks. They study the public health threats from recreational waters, including swimming pools and splash pads. They perform vessel sanitation, to ensure no health-based outbreaks occur on cruise ships.

NCEH is involved with preparedness. CDC centers have different responsibilities for different things. NCEH is responsible for any chemical terrorist or domestic emergency. The response to the chemical spill from the train derailment at East Palestine was an NCEH. NCEH assists the military in their chemical demilitarization program.

State and local environmental health agencies call on NCEH to provide expertise they lack. Milwaukee schools have a lead problem. They called NCEH. A train derailment at East Palestine. NCEH was called. Threats to Charleston, West Virginia's drinking water. NCEH came.

States and locals no longer have anyone to ask at the CDC regarding environmental health emergencies; no one remains to answer their call.

These programs are necessary to ensuring the nation remains healthy and protected from environmental threats.

We urge Congress, the Administration, and CDC leadership to reverse course and reaffirm the nation's commitment to environmental health by:

- Preserving and strengthening the NCEH, including the restoration of the:
  - Environmental Public Health Tracking
  - Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention
  - National Asthma Control Program
  - Climate and Health
  - Vessel Sanitation
- Ensuring sustained funding for environmental health programs; and
- Protecting the environmental public health workforce that serves at the intersection of environment and human health.

We live in a nation free from health threats from the environment. This is due to a combined effort between federal agencies, state health departments and environmental agencies, local agencies



and the territories. Each provide a unique and necessary role in protecting the public from environmental health threats.

Our mission—to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce—compels us to speak clearly: the elimination of the CDC's NCEH threatens the health security of the United States. We stand ready to work with public, private, and nonprofit partners to defend and strengthen the systems that protect the public from environmental health hazards.

In health,



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Cc: Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee  
Labor, Health & Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

Cc: Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
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