

May 14, 2025

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 Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

The undersigned 55 state and national 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 2026 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We also strongly oppose any proposal to remove ATSDR from the oversight of the CDC director. CDC and ATSDR staff work closely together to address environmental hazards and have ongoing relationships with impacted communities. Such a radical change, shifting ATSDR's functions out of CDC, would threaten ongoing work and future efforts to protect our communities from current and future threats.

ATSDR establishes and maintains effective relationships with the communities impacted by environmental hazards throughout the nation. The agency 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 has completed the initial Assessment of Chemical Exposure (ACE) investigation in the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. Over 700 residents and 330 first responders participated in the ACE survey. The results of the ACE investigation are used to inform the next steps of the response, and the agency remains engaged with the state health departments and other partners to continue addressing the impacts. In late 2021, ATSDR began providing support to the Hawaii Department of Health for the fuel releases in the U.S. Navy's Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam drinking water system. The agency is currently conducting a public health assessment to understand the health effects of the releases at Red Hill at the request of the Hawaii Department of Health. The assessment will build on previous ATSDR health investigations: the Pearl Harbor Naval Complex public health assessment (completed in 2005) and the three ACE investigations conducted since the 2021 fuel release.

In FY24, ATSDR responded to over 720 community, state, and federal requests for assistance. Over the last two years, ATSDR has also conducted more than 60 assessments in communities across the country and evaluated the health risks of over 600,000 people. The agency also educated over 30,000 health professionals on ways to diagnose and treat conditions related to hazardous exposures.

ATSDR published the final report for the PFAS exposure assessments in September 2022. The exposure assessments found that the average blood levels for PFAS were higher than national levels in most of the studied communities. The assessments also provided information about factors that affect exposure that can be used to prevent and reduce future exposures. The exposure assessments have included over 2,300 participants, assessed over 1,300 households and reached over 150,000 people through social media. ATSDR is currently conducting the most comprehensive health study of PFAS exposure to date across eight sites in the U.S. and results are expected later this summer.

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 in FY 2023 to 30 with states receiving a total of \$12.6 million in funding. 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 funding enabled the Missouri Department of Health and Human Services to collaborate with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Missouri Department of Natural Resources and local governments to address lead exposure concerns from contaminated drinking water. The partnerships led to the sampling of hundreds of private wells and a free community blood-lead testing event that helped people understand their risks and steps they can take to protect themselves and their families. 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.

For ATSDR to continue to build upon its impactful work protecting the public from environmental hazards, we urge you to support a request of at least \$100 million for the agency in FY 2026. 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,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Medical Toxicology
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Arizona Public Health Association
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Arkansas Public Health Association
Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Big Cities Health Coalition
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association
Endocrine Society
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.
Foundation for Healthy Generations
GO2 for Lung Cancer
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Idaho chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Public Health Association
Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Indiana Public Health Association
KY Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Public Health Association
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future (MS4SF)
Michigan Public Health Association (MPHA)
Minnesota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Mississippi Public Health Association
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Environmental Health Association
National League for Nursing
NC Public Health Association
Nevada Public Health Association
New Mexico Pediatric Society
Oklahoma Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Oregon Public Health Association
Pennsylvania Public Health Association
Society for Public Health Education
South Dakota Public Health Association
Southern California Public Health Association
Tennessee Public Health Association
Texas Pediatric Society
Trust for America's Health
Utah Public Health Association
Vermont Public Health Association
Washington State Public Health Association
Wisconsin Public Health Association
Wyoming Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

cc: Members of the House and Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittees