

May 15, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20215

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20215

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20210

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

The undersigned organizations write to express our support for \$65 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Program) in the FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Since the Tracking Program's launch in 2002, it has funded state programs to track and leverage data points for a variety of environmental factors and help solve environmental health issues. Tracking experts look at outdoor air quality, drinking water quality, and toxic substance releases and their related health effects such as cancer, reproductive health outcomes, hospitalizations for asthma, cardiovascular disease, carbon monoxide poisoning, childhood lead poisoning, and developmental disabilities. By analyzing data, monitoring health, identifying communities at risk, and educating residents, grantees can address hazards to protect public health.

States have the flexibility to develop tools most relevant to their communities. Examples include coastal states developing advisory dashboards on recreational water safety, while Midwestern states have developed tools to track the impact of woodburning stoves on air quality. Additionally, grantees have been able to boost surveillance of water quality from privately owned wells and monitor the impact of harmful algal blooms.

To date, grantees have taken over 700 data-driven actions to protect public health, from remediating hazards from decommissioned industrial sites to developing mapping tools to protect residents from wildfire smoke. Every dollar invested in the program has yielded a \$1.44 return in the form of health care savings. Currently, limited funding means the Tracking Program has sufficient funds to award only 31 states, one city, and one county. The request for \$65 million would allow CDC to fund all 50 states to do this important work. Additional levels of

funding could also allow the Program to continue to expand the type of health data available to policymakers, public health professionals, and the public to drive actions to improve and protect community health.

The Tracking Program has also developed an Environmental Justice Dashboard to identify and address environmental health inequities by demographic group to aid policymakers in decision-making and resource allocation. In addition, data from the Tracking Program is utilized to guide other programs at CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, including the Climate and Health Program, Heat and Health Tracker, and Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Increased investment in the Tracking Program can help more states and localities identify and mitigate environmental health threats to their communities before such threats can cause harm. Our \$65 million request is a vital investment to expand the Tracking Program's important work nationwide and ensure that existing grantees have the continued resources to build on their success and impact in protecting the health of communities.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Children's Environmental Health Network
Common Threads
Health E Strategies LLC
Illinois Public Health Association
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future (MS4SF)
National Association for Public Health Policy
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Environmental Health Association
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National REACH Coalition
New Orleans Health Department
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Public Health Institute
Society for Public Health Education
Trust for America's Health