

Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairperson  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairperson  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

24 May 2019

Dear Chairs Lowey and Shelby, and Ranking Members Granger and Leahy,

The undersigned medical, public health, and environmental health and justice advocacy organizations and professionals are writing to you to call attention to the NIEHS/EPA Children’s Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers (“Children’s Centers” or “Centers”). We are extremely concerned that the grants that currently fund these 13 centers are due to expire in July and that no announcement has been made to indicate renewed funding<sup>1</sup>. To ensure that these valuable programs can continue, we ask that the Appropriations Committees signal strong support for the Children’s Centers.

The Children’s Centers were established in 1998 under a joint funding arrangement by both agencies to study how environmental exposures affect children’s health. Researchers working in the Centers study how complex exposure profiles are linked to severe health outcomes such as impaired growth, poor birth outcomes, behavioral and learning deficits, respiratory and immune dysfunction, endocrine disruption, and childhood cancers. Center grantees evaluate exposure sources of national interest, including per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and environmental tobacco smoke.

Importantly, each Center has a special Community Outreach Translation Core that engages with community partners to inform the public and ensure that research is translated into practical information that can be delivered to the community. Moreover, the Children’s Centers have established cohorts – groups of children who are followed over time to better understand how early-life exposures contribute to diseases, including chronic conditions, later in life. Cohorts such as these are rare, and if they are disbanded due to funding cuts, at best it will take many years and far more resources to re-create a research infrastructure that yields comparable information.

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<sup>1</sup> Reardon, S. US environment agency cuts funding for kids’ health studies. *Nature*. 13 May, 2019. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01491-1> Accessed 17 May, 2019.

We have the responsibility to provide healthy environments for all children. Meeting this responsibility includes support for the research necessary to understand how today's environments impact children's health and ability to learn.

On behalf of the parents, children, and patients our organizations serve, we strongly urge you to support continued joint funding for the Children's Centers by EPA and NIEHS.

Sincerely,

ALLIANCE OF NURSES FOR HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN THORACIC SOCIETY

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES

ASTHMA AND ALLERGY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

BIRTH DEFECT RESEARCH FOR CHILDREN

CANCER FREE ECONOMY NETWORK

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

CLIMATE FOR HEALTH, ECOAMERICA

ENDOCRINE SOCIETY

NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF REPRODUCTION

TERATOLOGY SOCIETY

WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Individual Signers (not representative of institutions or organizations):

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Professor, School of Nursing & Health Studies  
Georgetown University

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Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing  
Emory University

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Chairman, Community Resource Network

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