

# Friends of *NIOSH*

April 3, 2024

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles “Chuck” Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leaders  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human  
Services, Education, & Related Agencies Committee  
on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health &  
Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: Restore NIOSH

Dear Senators Thune, Schumer, Capito and Baldwin, Speaker Johnson, and Representative Jeffries, Aderholt and DeLauro,

The *Friends of NIOSH* is a large coalition of industry, labor, professional, education and scientific organizations that are dedicated to research and prevention of occupational injuries and illness. Our expansive group understands the value of research, state-based surveillance of work-related injuries and illnesses, education and occupational illness prevention from many perspectives, including the labor, academic and business communities.

This week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced striking news, instituting layoffs throughout HHS that appear to terminate nearly every member of the 1,000+ person National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) workforce. These cuts are devastating not only to the NIOSH employees who carry out a vital mission every day: preventing workplace injury, illness and death, but also to the millions of American workers whose lives and livelihoods are protected by NIOSH’s efforts.

NIOSH protects the nation’s 164 million workers and provides the only dedicated federal investment for research needed to prevent injuries and illnesses that cost the US economy \$250 billion annually. Different than the regulatory approach to safety and health, NIOSH works cooperatively with employers and employees to adapt research findings into workable solutions. NIOSH is also the only federal research agency responsible for protecting the nation’s workers through evidence-based solutions.

NIOSH research, evaluations and certifications are known by businesses and workers nationwide. NIOSH tackles a voluminous number of challenges, advancing vital efforts that ensure that respirators used by 50 million American workers function effectively, that fire fighters avoid cancer, that coal miners avoid lung disease, that drivers are focused on the road and not distractions, that workplaces address substance use disorders brought

about by the growing scourge of opioids, and that the next generation of health and safety professionals are ready to monitor potential occupational health threats at workplaces throughout the country.

This work is carried out in research laboratories across the country, including Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington State and West Virginia. In addition to the impact from the loss of NIOSH's work, communities in each of these states will feel the immediate and long-reaching economic harm of these workforce eliminations.

The health and safety of the American workforce is a shared goal of all our organizations. Many of our members are employed in high-risk occupations. Rather than accept that working requires individuals to place their health and wellbeing at risk, we believe strongly that all occupations can be made safer through the prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses.

**We urge you to do everything possible to reverse this misguided move immediately so that NIOSH's vital mission continues, and its workforce can maintain efforts to keep Americans safe and well.**

We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Cc:

Sen. Justice  
Sen. Moreno  
Sen. Husted  
Sen. Murkowski  
Sen. Sullivan  
Sen. Fetterman  
Sen. McCormick  
Sen. Murray  
Sen. Cantwell  
Sen. Ossoff  
Sen. Warnock  
Sen. Bennet  
Sen. Hickenlooper