May 3, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairperson Murkowski, and Ranking Member Udall:

We write to you on behalf of our millions of members and supporters in support of level funding for the United States Chemical Safety Board (CSB) during fiscal year 2018 (FY18). This small agency, which operates with a staff of about 40 employees and an annual budget of just under $12 million, is critical for ensuring the safety of American workers and communities.

The CSB was created under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 as an independent, non-regulatory agency modeled after the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The mission of the CSB is to investigate catastrophic chemical accidents to determine the cause or causes of an accident and make recommendations to prevent future incidents. In short, the CSB exists to protect workers and communities by working with facility owners and operators, unions and workers, other government agencies, and voluntary standard-setting organizations.

Investigations by the CSB often involve peer review to ensure that facts, conclusions, and recommendations are appropriate. After an investigation, the CSB produces reports and safety videos that are widely used and circulated in the industrial safety community to prevent chemical accidents.

Since its inception, the CSB has investigated 130 major chemical incidents in 40 states and made nearly 800 safety recommendations to a wide variety of stakeholders. In recent years, those investigations have included a refinery fire at Chevron in Richmond, CA; a fatal explosion and fire at Horsehead Holding Company in Monaca, PA; a chemical release at Freedom Industries in Charleston, WV; a fatal hot work explosion at Dupont in Buffalo, NY; and a fire at US Ink in Rutherford, NJ.

Our members and supporters were disturbed that President Trump’s budget blueprint for FY18 proposed to eliminate funding for this small and vital agency.

We urge you to guarantee that the critical contribution this agency makes to the people of the United States continues by ensuring that the agency receives requested funding in the FY18 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO
American Federation of Teachers
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
BlueGreen Alliance
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Health
Clean Air Council
Coastal Coordination Program, The Ocean Foundation
Coming Clean
Communications Workers of America
Community In-power & Development Association Inc.
Earthjustice
Ecology Center
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Justice Health Alliance
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Green America
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace
Green Science Policy Institute
Headwater LLC
Healthy Building Network
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal - North America (ICJB-NA)
International Chemical Workers Union Council/UFCW
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW
League of Conservation Voters
Moms Clean Air Force
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies, Inc.
National Employment Law Project
National Resources Defense Council
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Occupational Health and Safety Section, American Public Health Association
Occupational Health Clinical Centers
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)
Sierra Club
Society for Occupational and Environmental Health
The 5 Gyres Institute
Union of Concerned Scientists
UNITE HERE International Union
United Steelworkers
United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities
U.S. PIRG
UWUA
Women’s Voices for the Earth

Alaska
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

California
Apostolic Faith Center
Benicians for a Safe and Healthy Community
Biomonitoring Resource Center at Commonweal
California Communities Against Toxics
California KidsIAQ
California Safe Schools
Coalition For A Safe Environment
Communities for a Better Environment
Community Dreams
Ellen Widess, former Chief of Cal OSHA, Strategic Consulting
EMERGE
Good Neighbor Steering Committee, Benicia
San Pedro-Wilmington Branch 1069 NAACP
St. Philomena Social Justice Ministry
Worksafe

Florida
Earth Action, Inc.

Georgia
Glynn Environmental Coalition

Illinois
Citizens Against Ruining the Environment

Maine
Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
Maine Labor Group on Health

Massachusetts
MassCOSH
Rafael Moure Eraso, UMass Lowell, Former CSB Chairperson

New Hampshire
New Hampshire Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health

New Jersey
American Federation of Teachers New Jersey
Burlington County CLC
CWA Local 1036
CWA New Jersey
GreenFaith
Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE)
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Education Association
NJ State Industrial Union Council
NJ Work Environment Council
Sierra Club – NJ Chapter

New York
Clean and Healthy New York
Empire State Consumer Project
NorthEast New York Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (NENYCOSH)

North Carolina
Toxic Free NC

Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health (PhilaPOSH)
Unitarian Universalist Climate Action Team

Rhode Island
RI Committee for Occupational Safety and Health
Texas
Texas Campaign for the Environment
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services

Utah
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment

Vermont
Vermont Conservation Voters
Vermont Public Interest Research Group

Virginia
Gerald Poje, CSB founding board member

Washington
Northwest Green Chemistry
SafeWork Washington

West Virginia
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
People Concerned About Chemical Safety

Wyoming
Paulson and Associates