

August 18, 2009

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
U.S. Senate
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

The undersigned groups would like to express our appreciation for your successful effort to address environmental public health tracking via an amendment incorporated into the *Affordable Health Choices Act*. We are pleased that your amendment would provide a formal authorization for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Coordinated Environmental Public Health Network, applied epidemiology fellowships, and biomonitoring activities.

Health tracking, biomonitoring and the training and placement of epidemiology fellows all serve an important public health role. As you know, the objective of the Tracking Program is to track environmental hazards and the diseases with which they may be associated. The Tracking Program helps us to identify populations at risk, establish potential relationships between environmental hazards and disease, and can guide intervention and prevention strategies. Through the Environmental Health Laboratory's biomonitoring activities, we can measure with great precision actual levels of chemicals in people's bodies, determine which population groups are at high risk for exposure and adverse health effects, assess public health interventions, and monitor exposure trends over time. Epidemiologists serve a critical role in conducting public health surveillance, and their services are very important to state and local health departments.

Your amendment clarifies the intent of Congress with regard to the future development of these programs, and we would like to commend your leadership through introduction of this amendment. Thank you again for your efforts, and we look forward to working with you on other important public health initiatives in the future.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Breast Cancer Fund
Environmental Epidemiology Program, Tennessee Department of Health
Healthy Homes Collaborative
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
National Environmental Health Association
Public Health Foundation
Trust for America's Health