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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2025

Richard Woychik, Ph.D.
Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
P.O. Box 12233
Mail Drop B2-06
Durham, NC 27709

Dear Director Woychik,

Please accept this letter of support for The University of Pittsburgh's application for the East Palestine (Ohio) Train Derailment Research Opportunity, administered through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. This application is seeking research funding to implement a community environmental health initiative that would help monitor and address the health impacts of the East Palestine, OH train derailment, affecting our Beaver County communities in Pennsylvania's 17th Congressional District.

On February 3, 2023, a freight train carrying vinyl chloride (VC) and other chemicals derailed in East Palestine, in Columbiana, OH. VC leaked into the air, soil, surface water, groundwater, potentially impacting indoor air and drinking water. Approximately 40% of the 10-mile most impacted area is in Beaver County, PA, just a few miles from East Palestine. To assess the immediate impact of the derailment on human health and the environment, the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) supported six time sensitive research projects in 2023, two of which were awarded to the University of Pittsburgh. Building on the success of these two time sensitive research grants, The University of Pittsburgh's Schools of Public Health, Medicine and Engineering, in collaboration with The Ohio State University (OSU) and the Columbiana County Health Department, are applying for this research opportunity.

This East Palestine (Ohio) Train Derailment Research Opportunity funding would allow The University of Pittsburgh to implement their "East Palestine – Partnership for Advancing Community Environmental Health (EP-PACE)" research initiative. It is important to note that the relevance and benefits of this research program go far beyond the areas impacted by the East Palestine derailment. Rail traffic in Western Pennsylvania is expanding dramatically, and accidents have indeed happened in the Commonwealth. Therefore, understanding the health effects of such disasters, and more importantly, being prepared for the next one is a key outcome of the work proposed by the University of Pittsburgh. Given the potential benefits to our entire region, I respectfully request that you give full and fair consideration to The University of Pittsburgh's application. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions regarding this funding request.

Very respectfully,

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

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