Place on CLHO letterhead

DATE

Curtis Cude and Julie Sifuentes

Principal Investigators/Program Managers

Environmental Public Health Section  
Center for Prevention and Health Promotion  
Oregon Health Authority – Public Health Division  
800 NE Oregon St., Suite 640  
Portland, OR 97232

RE: Support for Funding CDC-RFA-EH20-2005

Dear Mr. Cude and Ms. Sifuentes,

On behalf of the Oregon Conference of Local Health Officials (CLHO), I am writing in support of the application from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for funding through The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) funding opportunity titled “Strengthening environmental health capacity to detect, prevent, and control environmental health hazards through data-driven, evidence-based approaches.” Local and state collaboration on environmental health issues is critical to strengthen capacity to protect public health. This collaboration enhances our state’s ability to deliver effective, evidence-based environmental health programs, reduce the impact of environmental health hazards, and improve statewide environmental conditions.

Over the years, CLHO and OHA have collaborated to improve environmental health capacity of local public health authorities. CDC funds have passed through OHA in the form of cooperative agreements via programs including Environmental Public Health Tracking, Climate and Health, Brownfields, Health Impact Assessment, Child Lead Poisoning Prevention and Domestic Well Safety. Additionally, CLHO and OHA have collaborated in the development of strategic plans, public health policy and outreach and education about environmental health topics.

We will continue our collaboration with OHA in this new funding opportunity, where we will support and advise on the Oregon Environmental Health Capacity Improvement Program’s development and implementation. Our consultation will help ensure that OHA’s multi-component program is accessible and culturally appropriate for local communities across Oregon.

OHA’s Component A (Environmental Health Information Capacity Improvement Program) proposes to guide partners on the use of available environmental health information to assist in community health assessments and inform community health improvement plans. CLHO can support OHA by providing feedback on the guidance, helping to identify a pilot site receive training and helping to promote environmental health information capacity improvement workshops.

OHA’s Component B (Domestic Well Safety Program) proposes to refine existing outreach and education for people served by domestic wells. CHLO can support OHA by providing a forum to share important program information and promote outreach and education.

CLHO supports OHA’s proposed Environmental Health Disaster Resilience program that will deliver financial support, training, and technical assistance to increase local public health capacity to recover from, prevent, and mitigate environmental health hazards. CLHO’s Environmental Health Committee (CLHO-EH), which meets monthly with OHA’s environmental health programs, will advise OHA on fundamental programmatic elements, including the method of grantee selection, award amount, scope of work, training topics, and methods of accountability. This consultation will continue throughout the duration of the Environmental Health Disaster Resilience program, with OHA reporting evaluation outcomes to CHLO-EH and soliciting input on how to iteratively improve the program.

We anticipate that the Environmental Health Disaster Resilience program will support activities that build local resilience against environmental health hazards and reduce health impacts and disparities associated with climate-related disasters. These resilience and capacity building efforts can ultimately lead to improved and sustained community health.

While our partnership with OHA is robust, the lack of local environmental health capacity has been a significant barrier in protecting all Oregon communities. Thirty-two out of 33 local public health jurisdictions in Oregon report not having adequate capacity to identify and address environmental health hazards. This proposal which allocates funding for local health departments is critical. In order to protect our communities’ health, we strongly support the Oregon Health Authority’s application and look forward to continuing our collaboration into the future.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Warren

Chair, Conference of Local Health Officials