January 19th, 2023

RE: NIEHS Virtual Consortium for Translational/Transdisciplinary Environmental Research (ViCTER)

To Whom It May Concern:

The Oregon Conference of Local Health Officials (CLHO) supports the proposed NIEHS Virtual Consortium for Translational/Transdisciplinary Environmental Research (ViCTER) between Oregon State University and University of Colorado, titled **“Realizing Precision Environmental Health: Nutrient-Environmental Interactions”**. The Oregon Conference of Local Health Officials (CLHO) exists in Oregon Revised Statutes ([ORS 431.330](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors431.html)) to provide recommendations on foundational capabilities and modernization to the Oregon Health Authority. CLHO is made up of representatives from each of the 33 local public health authorities (LPHAs) in Oregon, each of which provides services and works to advance health equity in their communities.

Collaboration on climate change and health promotion is critical to strengthen our capacity to serve our communities, protect public health, and advance health equity. As such, CLHO is supportive of the proposed ViCTER which focuses on improving understanding of the relationships among environmental exposures, nutrition, and health outcomes with a strong emphasis on more meaningful, applicable results and dissemination. In particular, CLHO supports the intent of the project to seek input from the communities at risk for air pollutants and disasters such as wildfires. It is important in the research translation pipeline to prioritize community needs and interests. Oregon’s LPHAs are deeply embedded within their communities and have networks that can assist with identifying relevant stakeholders to provide input on issues of concern and assist with prioritizing nutrient and environmental interactions that are relevant to their communities.

This work also aligns with the Oregon’s work in implementing Public Health Modernization which currently focuses on the health impacts of climate change. Across Oregon, there are rising concerns about air quality, particularly associated with wildfires. Identifying susceptible communities and strategies to mitigate adverse health outcomes during low air quality exposure windows is a critical need and aligns with CLHO’s work in partnering with communities on climate change work. Oregon’s LPHAs also administer programs that focus on access to nutritious food, such as the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. With additional investment, Public Health Modernization will also include additional health promotion work that will further increases access to food; thus, the proposed consortium, which will develop tools to help discover dietary strategies that may help counter air pollutants and validate the findings in experimental models, aligns with the work of LPHAs at the local level and can accelerate meaningful discoveries that could lead to population-based intervention trials.

CLHO appreciates that the proposed ViCTER leverages the complementary research areas; environmental expertise of the OSU NIEHS Research Centers, public health and nutrition expertise from the College of Public Health and Human Sciences and the Linus Pauling Institute; and artificial intelligence expertise with new partners at the Health Center for Health Artificial Intelligence at University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical campus. The existence of the consortium would provide exciting translational opportunities for partnership in environmental and community health.

CLHO is supportive of having this virtual consortium between Oregon and Colorado and welcomes the opportunities for meaningful engagement to understand and translate findings at the community level. We are excited that this consortium will extend and enhance the expertise that exists in environmental health and ultimately help inform practices that help our communities in Oregon.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Chair, Conference of Local Health Officials