

February 8, 2018

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

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Lowey:

As families who have seen firsthand, the dangers of perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) in drinking water, we are urging you to support the IRIS program and the vital research it does that can help protect the health of people in communities like ours. Please reject the proposal to eliminate this vital EPA program.

We reside in just a few of the communities across the country who are currently dealing with PFCs in drinking water. Many of us are suffering from high levels of PFCs in our blood, from living without drinkable running water, from ulcerative colitis and other diseases known to be caused by PFCs, and from the loss of loved ones to cancer. Dozens of communities like ours around the country fear that the perfluorinated chemicals in local rivers, streams, and wells is as bad a threat as the ones that devastated Parkersburg, WV and Hoosick Falls, NY.

We are writing to oppose the Senate's proposal for FY2018 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies' funding bill that would eliminate EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) program. IRIS is not a regulatory program—rather it provides critical scientific underpinning for many of EPA's basic functions. Housed in EPA's Office of Research and Development, a non-regulatory arm of the agency, the IRIS program provides top tier chemical hazard assessments used by EPA, other federal agencies, regions, and states for everything from setting clean-up levels at contaminated sites to ensuring clean drinking water.

We need IRIS to better understand the health risks caused by widespread contamination of drinking water with PFCs—chemicals that remain in the environment and in the body for years. From big cities to small towns, state and local governments are grappling with how to manage contamination from well-known toxic PFCs, like PFOA and PFOS, while understanding and protecting against the potential health risks from less well-studied PFCs like GenX. IRIS is critical to providing support to resource- and expertise-strapped state and local governments that desperately need scientific advice.

Our best scientists with the most relevant experience must be available and deployed to tackle PFCs in order to manage the complicated public health situation unfolding with our water.

We, the undersigned, urge you to preserve the IRIS program and protect our health and the safe drinking water in our communities and those around the country.

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