

To: Members of the 119th Congress  
From: RIF'd staff of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, in our individual capacities  
Re: Support workers and save NIOSH!  
Date: May 10, 2025

We write to Congress in concern for the health and safety of your constituents, the American workforce.

**NIOSH protects American workers.** The *National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*, a critical institution for worker safety and health in the United States, was established by the 91st Congress in the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. NIOSH is the only federal entity charged to conduct “research ... relating to occupational safety and health,” workplace-related training and education, conduct health hazard evaluations, and other functions to “furnish solutions to the problems of occupational health and safety.” NIOSH has offices across 6 states, with dozens of professions, and is the world leader in occupational safety and health research. NIOSH is also a trusted industry partner, often invited into workplaces by business to address hazards both before and after they are known. Construction workers, electricians, coal miners, factory workers, healthcare workers, fire fighters, and first responders know the name NIOSH because the agency has been a strong and constant presence in their workplaces for over 50 years, and they know we are on the job to keep them safe.

**NIOSH is at risk for imminent destruction.** The administration’s activities over the past several months have almost completely impeded NIOSH’s ability to carry out its mission both now and into the future. Prohibitions on communications have prevented us from publishing study results, releasing reports, certifying respirators, and sharing information with the people who need us most. Mission-critical contracts have been cancelled and essential labs have been decommissioned, reducing our capacity to continue the essential work Congress has mandated we conduct to protect American workers. Most recently, over 90% of NIOSH staff have received reduction-in-force (RIF) notices placing them on administrative leave, pending separation. The shutdown was so rapid and disorderly, we were unable to ensure continuity of operations and maintenance of projects, documents, and facilities; with the closure of NIOSH, the government will be losing decades of institutional knowledge. And because NIOSH funds so much training of new occupational safety and health professionals at universities across the country, these cuts will have a devastating impact on the future of this essential work. Secretary Kennedy’s assertions that all of NIOSH’s essential programs will be uninterrupted, preserved, and moved to a new agency are not true. If the RIF is carried out and almost all staff are separated on June 2 and July 2, 2025, nearly all of NIOSH’s functions will be ended permanently.

**NIOSH is consistently considered to be one of the government’s most efficient investments of taxpayer dollars.** Costing roughly \$2 per U.S. worker per year (only 0.02% of the HHS budget), NIOSH is nimble, efficient, and cost-effective. NIOSH is respected and consulted by industry and professional associations worldwide, ensuring the agency’s science

applied to workplaces is authoritative, trusted, and responsive to the evolving needs of U.S. industry. Because of NIOSH's track-record as an efficient steward of taxpayer dollars, Congress gave the agency responsibility for such data-driven critical needs as energy workers compensation analysis, the health program for 9/11 responders and survivors, and the fire fighter cancer registry. It's the authoritative stature of NIOSH that allows the agency to provide these services. Without NIOSH, more workers will suffer preventable deaths, illnesses, and injuries.

**With the administration calling for a return to large-scale domestic manufacturing, mining, and other economic activity, this is no time to abandon worker safety and health.**

Nothing less than the full restoration of the NIOSH staff will enable us to successfully continue the mission set for us in 1970. Moreover, dismantling NIOSH and burying it deep within the new agency will not be in keeping with the 91st Congress's intent to "make visible and elevate occupational safety and health research." Nor is it sensible, since NIOSH has a proven track record of successes working in concert with our CDC colleagues.

Please send a message to the Trump administration that today's Congress still supports America's workers by demanding the restoration and protection of NIOSH in its entirety within CDC.

The views expressed in this letter are those of the signatories, and do not represent the views or determinations of any federal agency. This letter is respectfully submitted in our personal capacities, and not as NIOSH representatives. From Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, Washington DC, and West Virginia, we are:

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