

**LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE
MICKEY LELAND NATIONAL URBAN AIR TOXICS RESEARCH CENTER**

Background

The Regional Air Quality Planning Committee (RAQPC) recently received a letter from Craig Beskid to request support for continued federal funding for the Mickey Leland National Urban Air Toxics Research Center (NUATRC).

Current Situation

The NUATRC was authorized in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments to specifically conduct peer reviewed research on the human health effects from exposure to air toxics. Since its inception, the NUATRC has conducted research that has advanced the understanding of air toxics significantly in the Houston region, as well as in other parts of the county. Furthermore, the NUATRC has a proven track record of being a good steward of federal and private resources, by using current sources of funding to attract additional sources of funding to support specific research initiatives. For example, in the current study entitled “Houston Exposure to Air Toxics Study” or HEATS, \$400,000 of NUATRC funding was used to attract approximately \$800,000 in funding from other sources. That greater than 2:1 match has enabled the NUATRC to conduct high caliber research that both the EPA and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at NIH recognize as cutting edge and complementary to the air toxics research done on a national level by EPA

Securing fiscal year 2009 funding is critical to the continued operation of the NUATRC. An interruption in federal funding would seriously impair the completion of mandated research to study human health effects of air toxics. See chart below summarizing the research NUATRC has specifically done in the Houston region.

Summary of Recent Houston Area Air Toxics Research Conducted by NUATRC

| Funding Year | Amount | Project Name and Description |
|---------------------|---------------|---|
| FY96 – FY02 | \$217,000 | Personal Exposures to Toxic Air Pollutants: Development and testing of Personal Exposure Badges in Houston, TX. Laboratory Evaluation |
| FY96-FY04 | \$476,000 | A Study of Personal Exposure to Air Toxics Among a Subset of the Residential U.S. Population (VOC Project). Collaborative NUATRC Project with the National Center for the Health Statistics (NCHS), CDC The main objective of the VOC Project was to provide a profile of personal exposures to a group of VOCs in a national population. No other data set like this exists, as far as we know. The population for the VOC |

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|---|------------------|---|
| | | Project is a representative subset of the residential US population aged 20-59 years. |
| FY98-FY01 | \$100,000 | Two Houston Asthma Symposia. National and Texas Medical Center based scientists gathered to assess link between asthma and air toxics exposure. |
| FY97/FY04 | \$1.8 M | RIOPA (Relationships of Indoor, Outdoor and Personal Air) – Comparing Houston, TX with similar cities -- Elizabeth, NJ and Los Angeles |
| FY01 | \$315,000 | Air Toxics and Asthma in Children (ATAC), Houston, TX |
| FY01-FY04 | \$293,000 | Development of New Generation Personal Monitors for Fine Particulate Matter (PM) and its Metal Content |
| FY01-FY04 | \$217,000 | Development of a High efficiency Sampling Pump for Personal Sampling of Particulate Matter |
| FY01-FY04 | \$90,000 | Environmental Technology Verification Program, Advanced Monitoring Systems Center Verification Report and Statement for Personal Cascade Impactor Samplers |
| FY05 | \$185,000 | A Pilot Geospatial Analysis of Exposure to Air Pollutants (with Special Attention to Air Toxics) and Hospital Admissions in Harris County, Texas |
| FY05 | \$50,000 | Air Toxics Workshop I, Houston, TX |
| FY05/FY06 | \$1.1 M | HEATS (Houston Exposure to Air Toxics Study) – Current study involving 200 homes in Houston |
| FY06 | \$150,000 | Development of database for Houston region on exposure data based on RIOPA study. |
| FY06 | \$50,000 | NHANES database (National Health and Nutrition Environmental Study) – Using data from NHANES, development of first database to track VOC exposure and blood born VOCs |
| FY07 | \$50,000 | Air Toxics Workshop II, Houston, TX |
| TOTAL | \$5.093 M | |
| % of Total Research Budget (1996-2007) | 42% | |

Requested Action

Staff requests that RAQPC send a letter of support for NUATRC funding for fiscal year 2009 to Congressman Al Green, the project sponsor, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Senator John Cornyn as well Texas members of the House Appropriations Committee: Chet Edwards, Ciro Rodriguez, Kay Granger, John Abney Culberson, and John Carter. Additionally, staff requests that RAQPC forwards this letter to the H-GAC Board of Directors for their consideration.