

April 15, 2008

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hutchinson:

I am writing in strong support of FY09 funding for the National Urban Air Toxics Research Center (NUATRC), located in the Texas Medical Center. 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 establishment, 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 country.

As the Houston region and other areas throughout the nation strive to ensure that air quality does not compromise public health, it is critical that sound, scientific data is available upon which to base public policy decisions. Time and time again in the Houston region's ongoing efforts to address air quality issues, scientific understanding has led to more effective strategies to address air quality.

The NUATRC has consistently received annual federal funding and private funding since its inception. During these times of competing budget priorities we recognize the merit of broad reaching efforts to ensure that congressional spending is in the best interest of the taxing-paying public.

The NUATRC has a proven track record of being a good steward of federal resources, by using the existing federal and private 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 current 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.

It is clearly in the best interest of the Houston region, as well as the nation, to ensure that the NUATRC receive FY09 funding in order to continue conducting the important research as directed by Congress.

Sincerely yours,

B. J. Gaines, Jr.  
Walker County Commissioner  
Chair, H-GAC Board of Directors

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