



June 30, 2022

Hon. Rosa L. DeLauro
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairperson DeLauro:

We are writing to urge you and the entire Appropriations Committee to approve full and adequate funding for workplace safety in FY 2023. This must include substantial funding increases for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB).

We are glad to know that the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, which you also chair, has recommended a significant \$100 million increase in OSHA funding, as well as increases for MSHA and NIOSH. In addition, the Subcommittee Interior, Environment and Related Agencies has recommended a funding increase for the CSB.

Chronic underfunding for workplace safety means a lack of enforcement with not enough safety inspectors, not enough safety inspections and preventable risks for America's workers. As you are aware, at the end of 2021, US OSHA had just 750 inspectors, [the lowest number in the agency's history](#).¹ At current staffing levels, [it would take OSHA 236 years to inspect every workplace under its jurisdiction](#).²

Preventable workplace deaths and occupational injuries cause a huge toll of unnecessary pain and suffering for workers and families and [cost the U.S. economy hundreds of billions of dollars every year](#).³ We simply cannot afford to cut corners on measure to keep workers safe – especially not when workers are facing ever greater threats to our health and well-being.

- The COVID-19 pandemic, which is far from over, [has caused the largest U.S. workplace death toll from any single disease or event in U.S. history](#).⁴ Frontline workers, who cannot work from home, are still exposed every day to a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease.
- Dangers from heat exposure – [which leads to as many as 2,000 deaths and 170,000 occupational injuries every year](#)⁵ – will continue to grow as climate change leads to more severe weather events in years to come.
- Meanwhile, a lack of consistent and aggressive enforcement of existing safety laws means that workers are still dying from well-known hazards, such as falls from height or trench collapses. These tragic events can be prevented if employers follow long-established safety protocols.

Each year, [some 5,000 workers die from preventable sudden workplace trauma, while an estimated 120,000 lives](#)⁶ are claimed due to long-term occupational diseases and more than three million workers suffer preventable workplace injuries and illnesses.

On behalf of these workers and their families, we are hopeful that you and the entire Appropriations Committee will approve, at a minimum, the funding increases for workplace safety agencies that are vital to reduce the risk of illness, injuries and deaths on the job. We urge you to not only approve these budget increases in your Committee, but to advocate forcefully for these resources as a final FY 2023 budget is approved by the full House, the U.S. Senate and President Biden.

Sincerely,

Mike Fitts

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1. Bloomberg Law, "[Federal Workplace Safety Inspector Numbers Fall Under Biden](#)," November 16, 2021
2. AFL-CIO, "[Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, 2022](#)," April 2022
3. *Ibid.*
4. National COSH, "[Dirty Dozen 2022](#)," April 2022
5. Public Citizen, "[Boiling Point: OSHA Must Act Immediately to Protect Workers From Deadly Temperatures](#)," June 2022
6. National COSH, "[Dirty Dozen 2022](#)," April 2022