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The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Whitman:

Over the past year, I have repeatedly protested this Administration's political tampering with scientific advisory committees and panels. I have now learned of what appears to be another disturbing example of this tampering: after a request by the pesticide industry, EPA has apparently intervened to stop three of the nation's leading experts on the effects of pesticides on children — including the senior environmental health official at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) — from speaking at an EPA-funded educational conference for health care professionals.

I urge you to explain fully what has happened. I request all documents related to political tampering with this and any other educational events. EPA should also support, in writing, new invitations to speak for the three experts, Dr. Richard Jackson, Dr. Philip Landrigan, and Dr. Lynn Goldman.

These three experts are among the most accomplished researchers and policymakers on the subject of children and pesticides in the country. Dr. Jackson is the director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Landrigan served as the Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences committee on pesticides and children, was a senior advisor to EPA Administrator Carol Browner on children's health and the environment, and is considered one of the leading academic experts in the nation on children's environmental health. Dr. Goldman, who formerly headed the Office of Pesticides at EPA, now teaches at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and serves on the board of the

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Children's Environmental Health Network. Each was invited to the EPA-funded conference by a committee of leading academic and government officials.

The invitations were sent in the spring of this year by the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation, Inc. (NEETF), a congressionally chartered foundation that works closely with U.S. agencies. Over two days in September, NEETF planned to gather 150 to 200 health care providers, private sector representatives, and government officials at a conference on the state of the science on pesticide safety. The conference's goal was to launch "National Strategies for Health Care Providers: Pesticides Initiative," a national effort to improve "the recognition, management, and prevention of pesticide poisonings and overexposures by health care providers."¹ Jointly funded by EPA and several other government agencies, the Pesticides Initiative is designed to address serious deficiencies in medical training. For example, despite the fact that 20,000 children are poisoned each year by pesticides, the vast majority of medical schools require virtually no study of environmental medicine in their four-year programs.

Specifically, Dr. Goldman was invited to lecture on September 19 on the topic of "Pesticide Usage, Health Effects, and Populations at Risk." Dr. Landrigan was invited to speak on the same day on "Pesticides and Children." And Dr. Jackson was invited to lead a plenary session on September 20.

On July 8, 2002, however, Jay Vroom and Allen James, representing the pesticide industry, wrote EPA to protest the planned conference. Mr. Vroom is President of CropLife America, formerly known as the National Agricultural Chemicals Association. Mr. James is President of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), a trade association for pesticide suppliers and producers. In a joint letter to Assistant Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, Mr. Vroom and Mr. James expressed "serious reservations and objections to certain participants in the program." They explained, "In particular, we refer to Dr. Lynn Goldman, Dr. Philip Landrigan, and Dr. Richard Jackson." Mr. Vroom and Mr. James then alleged without any supporting evidence that "[t]hese individuals have demonstrated clear bias against pesticides."²

On August 13, Assistant Administrator Johnson responded to CropLife and RISE:

My staff reviewed the National Forum draft agenda that NEETF circulated for comment. *They share some of your concerns that the draft agenda might signal a departure from*

¹National Environmental Education & Training Foundation, *National Strategies for Health Care Providers: Pesticides Initiative: Backgrounder* (2002).

²Letter from Mr. Jay Vroom and Mr. Allen James to EPA Assistant Administrator Stephen L. Johnson (July 8, 2002).

the purpose of the initiative. . . . After consultation with NEETF, it was agreed that the best interest of the initiative would be served by postponing the Forum until 2003. The agenda, and the process for developing it, will be restructured to insure that we maintain the focus on the original purpose of the initiative.³

The NEETF forum was subsequently postponed to June 2003. So far, Dr. Landrigan, Dr. Goldman, and Dr. Jackson have yet to be re-invited.

This exchange of letters indicates that EPA intervened, at the prompting of the pesticide industry, to “restructure” a national conference on the adverse health effects of pesticides. This apparent censorship is wrong. It is one thing for you to make political appointments to political slots in the agency. But it is another thing entirely for EPA to impose a political litmus test on speakers at an educational event for medical professionals.

As a co-author of the Food Quality Protection Act, I am well aware of the health risks that pesticides pose for children and of the urgent need to educate clinicians about these potential harms. The individuals attacked by the pesticide industry are all trained pediatricians who are extraordinarily well qualified to educate other medical professionals. Their exclusion from the conference would signal that EPA has little interest in providing clinicians with science-based information.

I am enclosing copies of the EPA correspondence with CropLife and RISE. I am also enclosing the invitation packet sent out to hundreds of clinicians and leading experts for the September conference that has yet to occur.

I would like a full explanation of what happened in this case, including a specific description of any objection EPA has to the participation of Dr. Jackson, Dr. Landrigan, or Dr. Goldman. Please include an explanation of exactly what Assistant Administrator Johnson meant by saying that the proposed conference was a “departure” from the goals of the Pesticide Initiative. I also request copies of any further communication between EPA and CropLife or RISE about this matter. I ask that you further disclose any other changes made to any other educational programs sponsored by EPA after a request from a regulated industry.

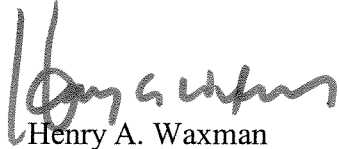
Finally, I urge you to encourage NEETF in writing to invite these three experts on children and pesticides to the June conference. The Administration should not try to rig the outcome of a scientific process to match its political agenda.

³Letter from EPA Assistant Administrator Stephen L. Johnson to Mr. Jay Vroom (Aug. 13, 2002); Letter from EPA Assistant Administrator Stephen L. Johnson to Mr. Allen James (Aug. 13, 2002) [Emphasis added].

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I request a reply to this letter by January 6, 2002.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "W".

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member