Intersociety Forum
August 15, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20150

Dear Representatives Cole and DeLauro, and Senators Collins and Murray:

We write to express our deep concern regarding the proposed elimination of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) in the President's Fiscal Year 2026 budget, which recommends zero funding for the agency and effectively calls for its closure. Such a step would not only undermine statutory mandates but would also jeopardize public health, worker safety, and environmental security.

The CSB was established as an independent federal agency under **Section 112(r)(6) of the Clean Air Act**, as amended by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(6)). Congress created the Board specifically to investigate industrial chemical accidents, determine root causes, and issue recommendations to prevent future incidents. Unlike regulatory or enforcement bodies, the CSB's sole mission is investigative and preventive.

For FY2025, the CSB was appropriated approximately **$14 million**—a modest sum for an agency whose work contributes directly to the prevention of catastrophic chemical incidents and the protection of workers, communities, and emergency responders nationwide. Yet the agency operates leanly and with a mandate that serves an irreplaceable public interest.

The Board's independent investigations have led to critical safety improvements across multiple sectors. Its work has exposed systemic deficiencies in industrial practices, strengthened federal and state regulatory approaches, and enhanced community preparedness. Notable investigations include:

- **West Fertilizer Company Explosion (Texas, 2013):** The CSB's investigation revealed regulatory gaps in the storage of ammonium nitrate, prompting nationwide changes in chemical storage and emergency planning.
- **BP Texas City Refinery Explosion (2005):** The Board's findings exposed deep-seated flaws in corporate safety culture, leading to sweeping reforms in the petrochemical industry.
- **Philadelphia Energy Solutions Refinery Fire (2019):** The CSB's report shed light on corrosion and maintenance failures, influencing future risk-based mechanical integrity assessments.
- **Dow's Louisiana Complex Investigation (2023):** The proposed closure would halt investigations into incidents like this, which released 30,000 pounds of ethylene oxide.

In the absence of the CSB, these and countless other critical analyses and safety recommendations simply would not exist. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) do not and cannot serve the same function. Neither agency possesses the statutory independence, investigatory mission, or technical specialization that the CSB was designed to provide.

Congress has repeatedly affirmed the importance of the CSB's role, and we respectfully urge you to do so again. At a time when industrial complexity, climate risk, and community vulnerability are all rising, the nation cannot afford to abandon a watchdog whose sole mission is to learn from disaster and prevent its recurrence.

We urge you to oppose any efforts to eliminate the CSB and ensure that the agency is fully funded for FY2026 and beyond.

Respectfully,

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American Industrial Hygiene Association, Lawrence Sloan, MBA, CAE, FASAE, lsloan@aiha.org

ISEA - International Safety Equipment Association, Cam Mackey, cmackey@safetyequipment.org

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Campus Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Association, James Crandall, president@cshema.org

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