

# Environmental Laboratories: Protecting Our Water from Contamination

## Unmet Needs

- ▶ Fund EPA's Homeland Security Laboratory Program (\$9.5 million) to:
  - Build capacity to analyze environmental samples for chemical, biological and radiological contaminants.
  - Continue deploying portable laboratories around the nation capable of screening unknown substances for hazardous threats.
- ▶ Provide EPA with funding (\$42 million) to protect the nation's drinking water from contamination by:
  - Building a nationwide laboratory network for drinking water (Water Laboratory Alliance).
- ▶ Continue to fund a comprehensive and fully coordinated surveillance system.

## Homeland Security Laboratory Program

EPA is tasked with protecting human health and the environment on which it depends. Under Homeland Security Presidential Directives 9 and 10 and the National Homeland Security Strategy, EPA is the primary agency responsible for environmental sampling and analysis in response to terrorist incidents. As such, EPA must coordinate with environmental laboratories around the country.

Currently, EPA lacks the capacity to analyze chemical, biological or radiological warfare



agents. To begin to address such issues, APHL is bringing together environmental laboratories from across the nation. Without funding for both EPA and environmental laboratories, our government's ability to respond effectively during an emergency is severely hampered.

The most significant gap is the ability to analyze environmental chemical warfare agents. With full funding, EPA could operate and maintain two mobile analytical units to analyze chemical warfare agents. Additionally, EPA could build fixed facilities by making awards to states through a competitive grant process. Such facilities improve laboratories' ability to safely screen unknown samples for hazardous substances in order to determine where they should be further analyzed.



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## Drinking Water Laboratory Response Preparedness

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9 directs EPA to develop a comprehensive and fully coordinated surveillance system and a nationwide laboratory network for drinking water. EPA needs increased funding to develop the following:

- The Water Security Initiative, including a Contaminant Warning System, for the timely detection of, and response to, drinking water contamination in order to reduce public health and economic impacts.
- The Water Laboratory Alliance to provide the drinking water sector a nationwide

network of laboratories for support during contamination events.

- The Drinking Water Laboratory Response Preparedness Project for coordination of state environmental laboratories' efforts with regard to drinking water preparedness and response.

APHL strongly encourages the direct involvement of both environmental and public health laboratories in these activities. These efforts will help to protect thousands of miles of drinking water and provide an early chemical and biological terrorism warning mechanism for millions of drinking water consumers.