



NAVAJO NATION ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Post Office Box 339, Window Rock, Arizona 86515
Telephone: (928) 871-7692 · Fax: (928) 871-7996



Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr.
PRESIDENT

Ben Shelly
VICE PRESIDENT

April 27, 2010

Dr. Johnnye Lewis, Director
Community Environmental Health Program
College of Pharmacy
University of New Mexico
905 Vassar NE
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Dear Dr. Lewis,

The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) supports the DiNEH Project's proposal for a Navajo Prospective Birth Cohort Study that will be submitted in response to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) Funding Opportunity Announcement (RFA-TS-10-001) seeking proposals for conducting a *Prospective Birth Cohort Study Involving Environmental Uranium Exposure in the Navajo Nation (U01)*.

Subject to the availability of resources and a more formal Memorandum of Understanding NNEPA will work with UNM's Community Environmental Health Program, Southwest Research and Information Center (SRIC) and other agencies and organizations in designing and implementing a Navajo Prospective Birth Cohort Study (NPBCS). We have worked with you, Chris Shuey and your Navajo field staff extensively over the past two decades, and have observed for ourselves the commitments you have made to incorporating Navajo language and cultural teachings in your community-based research.

While NNEPA's roles and responsibilities in the Study are still being developed, it is our intent to work with you and the DiNEH Project Research Team on the following activities and in-kind services:

- Participation of top NNEPA officials, including myself and Yolanda Barney, director of our Public Water Supply Supervision Program, in Study design and protocol development; this participation will include attending regular Research Team meetings in person or through teleconferencing. Ms. Barney will be the long-term liaison to the study and have the responsibility of ensuring study progress is communicated to NNEPA staff.
- Staff support and use of environmental assessment equipment in conducting environmental surveys in and around the homes of participants in the Study.

- Provision of water quality data for public water supplies to assess drinking water exposures, and other available environmental data that will help in identifying potential exposures.
- Provision of environmental survey data for abandoned uranium mines and waste dumps and homes and structures made with contaminated materials.

We understand that the DiNEH Project's commitments will include:

- Hiring and supporting 4-8 Community Environmental Health Research Specialists (CEHRSSs) to support participant enrollment, data collection, and environmental assessments;
- Provision of training for CEHRSSs in environmental health, research design, data collection and management, and analysis;
- Mentorship of CEHRSS to develop their expertise in environmental health assessment;
- Planning and coordination of in-home and vicinity environmental assessments by Mr. Shuey in collaboration with NNEPA technical staff; and
- Obtaining all necessary approvals for research from the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board (NNHRRB) and UNM Human Research Review Committee, with support from NNEPA and other Navajo collaborators.

NNEPA supports this important Study because it may provide information that can be used to prioritize cleanup of abandoned mines and restoration of environmental resources impacted by past mining. Furthermore, we support the activities outlined above because we have confidence in your team's demonstrated ability to conduct community-based research on the Navajo Nation, to involve and build the capacity of Navajo researchers and community members, and to ensure decision-makers are informed of your results both within and outside of Navajo Nation. Over the past 20 years, you and your colleagues have a track record of respectful and successful research on issues surrounding the Navajo Uranium Legacy. Your findings have demonstrated that living near abandoned mines increases health risks, and this knowledge has helped affected community members advocate effectively for mine cleanup and public health protection.

Accordingly, you have our full support for the proposed NPBCS, and we look forward to working with you on this important and critical study.

Sincerely,



Stephen Etsitty
Executive Director



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

April 16, 2010

Dr. Johnnye Lewis, Director
Community Environmental Health Program
College of Pharmacy
University of New Mexico
905 Vassar NE
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Johnnye
Dear Dr. Lewis,

I am pleased to hear that you and your partners in the DiNEH Project are preparing a research plan in response to ATSDR's recently announced funding opportunity for a prospective birth cohort study to assess possible effects of environmental uranium exposure on Navajo women and newborns. I have reviewed your letter of intent, filed with CDC, and I believe your proposed plan to use a community-based approach to recruiting and enrolling women in the study is excellent. I fully support your proposal.

In 2008, the EPA Region 9 Emergency Response Section, through our contractor, ERRG, contracted with UNM to use the DiNEH Project staff from the UNM Community Environmental Health Program and Southwest Research and Information Center to conduct public outreach and educational activities. This relationship helped EPA to inform Navajo communities about health-risks posed by unregulated water sources contaminated with uranium and other heavy metals and radionuclides. Your staff developed effective risk communication methods using Navajo language, photographs and graphics to communicate water quality results with the goal of increasing understanding among community members. On behalf of EPA and the Navajo Nation you have prepared professional and culturally appropriate Public Service Announcements. For these reasons, my office has continued our relationship to provide outreach for recent CDC water sampling results, and has expanded your scope of work to use SRIC's Navajo-speaking staff at EPA-sponsored community meetings, to prepare a video describing water quality results, and to support participation by you and your co-investigator, Chris Shuey, in a Navajo Nation Health and Human Services Committee initiated task-force on mitigating exposures to contaminated water sources in the region. We look forward to continuing this relationship in the coming years.

We have received very positive evaluations of your outreach efforts and I have no doubt that you will be successful in implementing similar programs in the proposed birth cohort study. I also have great confidence in your Research Team's capability to conduct scientifically valid research that is respectful of Navajo customs and culture.

Again, you have my full support, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to address the Navajo Uranium Legacy.

Sincerely,

Harry Allen
Harry Allen, Chief
Emergency Response Section
U.S. EPA Region 9

April 28, 2010

Johnnye Lewis, PhD, DABT
Community Environmental Health Program
College of Pharmacy
MSC09 5360
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

Dear Dr. Lewis,

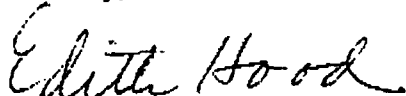
As a grassroots member of the Red Water Pond Road Community Association, I am in support of this funding opportunity to conduct a research on the possible effects of uranium exposure of newborns especially in and around mining areas on the Navajo Reservation. These kinds of opportunities have been a long time coming and a godsend for the generations to come, even though present generations may already be in some contamination.

I say this because there might be a pattern of respiratory problems with our younger children in the community. They had and have been coming down with breathing and respiratory problems such as asthma and RSV. Since, my community lives within close proximity of two mines, the four winds blow any which way, upwind, down wind.

So I believe it is important to have a system of tracking birth defects to see what, when, and where they happened, and plan and evaluate ways to prevent adverse consequences. Of course, we do this for the optimal health and development of all children.

And in collaborating, sharing information, networking, and strategizing, we will gain knowledge and further the goals of our communities. To understand environmental factors and disorders is important in learning more about prevention of these environmentally induced problems.

Sincerely,



Edith Hood
P.O. Box 182
Churchrock, NM 87311

April 30, 2010

Johnnye Lewis, Director
Community Environmental Health Program
College of Pharmacy
MSC09 5360
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

Dear Johnnye,

On behalf of the Red Water Pond Road Community as grass-roots organization of Diné families who have experienced and lived with the impacts of uranium mining and milling in the Church Rock mining area since the 1960s. Our mission is to restore the land and water contaminated by uranium mining to its original state and to improve the health of community members, and protect and preserve the natural and cultural environment in which we live, we wish to express our enthusiastic support for the DiNEH Project's research plan in response to ATSDR's recently announced funding opportunity for a prospective birth cohort study to assess possible effects of environmental uranium exposure on Navajo women and newborns. After reviewing your letter of intent filed with CDC, we believe your proposed plan to use a community-base approach will be effective in educating, recruiting and enrolling women in the study.

Throughout the years, we have received positive evaluations of your outreach efforts and we have no doubt that you will be successful in implementing similar programs in the proposed birth cohort study. We also have great confidence in your Research Team's capability to conduct scientifically valid research that is respectful of Diné customs, tradition and culture.

You have our full support, and we are looking forward to continuing to work with you to address the Navajo Uranium Legacy.

Thank you very much.



Vanessa I. Nez
Future President of Youth Organization 1st generation of
Red Water Pond Road Community Association



Darian B. Slim
Future President of Youth Organization 2nd generation of
Red Water Pond Road Community Association