



**STATEMENT OF U.S. EPA LABOR UNIONS
ON IMPROPER WHITE HOUSE INFLUENCE ON EPA'S RESPONSE TO THE
TERROR ATTACK OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

We, the undersigned representatives of the workers who perform health and environmental protection duties at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency across America, express our anger and dismay over evidence of the White House's improper actions in connection with communicating health risk information to emergency workers and residents in New York immediately following the terror attacks on that city on September 11, 2001.

EPA's dedicated Civil Service employees performed their duties swiftly and competently following the terror attack, assessing as accurately as possible the environmental health risks faced by the brave rescue workers and nearby residents from toxic substances released in the attack. These workers reported to senior EPA officials their best estimate of the risks, and they expected those estimates and the accompanying recommendations for protective measures to be released in a timely manner to those who needed the information.

The public was not informed of all of these health risks, some of which were avoidable. This information was withheld from the public under orders from the White House. Instead, the Bush White House had information released, drafted by political appointees, that it knew to contradict the scientific facts. It misinformed. And many rescue workers and citizens suffered. Some citizens now face the long-term risk of asbestos-related lung cancer as well as other debilitating respiratory ailments as a result.

Little did the Civil Service expect that their professional work would be subverted by political pressure applied by the White House. This unwarranted and inexcusable interference with the professional work of the Civil Service by politicians reporting directly to President Bush caused rescue workers and residents to be exposed to health risks that could have been, indeed should have been, avoided.

We express our solidarity with the rescue workers and residents who were affected adversely by this outrageous action of President Bush's staff. There is no excuse for White House politicians imposing their values and overriding the Civil Service's best advice on protecting those still digging in the wreckage and those whose homes and offices were covered with toxic debris.

President Bush owes the rescue workers, residents, dedicated Civil Service workers and the American people more than an apology for his actions in this matter. President Bush should take steps to compensate the rescue workers and residents who were harmed by his administration's actions.

The President's political appointees' interference with the professional work of the EPA Civil Service has seriously harmed EPA's credibility. Before there is another national emergency, that credibility must be restored.

The President must pledge to never again order EPA to tell less than the whole truth about a public health emergency.

Signed:

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/s/ Alan Hollis /s/ Henry Burrell
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/s/ Nancy Barron /s/ Gretchen Helm
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/s/ Mary St. Peter /s/ Mark Coryell
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