

# U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

## Senator Boxer Introduces Legislation to Help Communities Investigate and Address Disease Clusters and Environmental Hazards

**Washington, DC** – Today, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, introduced legislation to help communities determine whether there is a connection between “clusters” of cancer, birth defects and other diseases, and contaminants in the surrounding environment. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Bill Nelson (D-FL) joined Senator Boxer as original co-sponsors of the legislation.

Senator Boxer said: **“Whenever there is an unusual increase in disease within in a community, those families deserve to know that the federal government’s top scientists and experts are accessible and available to help, especially when the health and safety of children are at risk. I am pleased to be introducing this legislation today that will enable communities to get the answers they need as quickly as possible.”**

Throughout the country, there are communities that experience unexpected increases in the incidence of birth defects, cancer and other diseases. The legislation being introduced today is designed to:

- Strengthen federal agency coordination and accountability when investigating these “clusters” of disease;
- Increase assistance to areas impacted by potential disease clusters; and
- Authorize federal agencies to form partnerships with states and academic institutions to investigate and help address disease clusters.

The legislation being introduced today is supported by the Trevor’s Trek Foundation, co-founded by Charlie Smith and Susan Rosser with Trevor Schaefer, who survived after being diagnosed with brain cancer seven years ago at the age of 13. Trevor and his family have worked to raise awareness of

disease clusters and their possible links to toxins in the environment, and to help build support for legislation to assist communities experiencing suspected disease clusters.

The sponsors of the bill have also received letters of support from the Breast Cancer Fund; the Center for Health, Environment and Justice; the Children's Environmental Health Network; National Disease Clusters Alliance; Natural Resources Defense Council; the Sierra Club; and Dr. Philip J. Landrigan, MD, MSc., Professor of Pediatrics, Dean for Global Health, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Preventive Medicine, Director of the Children's Environmental Health Center, Mount Sinai Medical Center

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