

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush,

We again are writing to you about the short- and long-term health effects of workers who were at Ground Zero in the hours and days following the terrorist attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001. As we have noted in three previous letters to you, we strongly believe that there needs to be a large-scale, fully-funded program to monitor the workers to determine the extent to which the harmful particles and substances in the air around the site have adversely affected the health of these individuals.

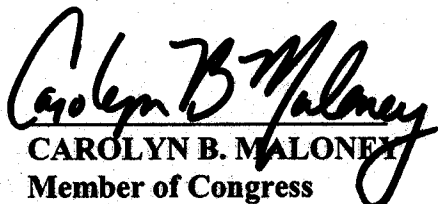
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued a draft evaluation of the health effects of exposure to the pollution caused by the collapse of the World Trade Center (WTC), which confirms what has been stated in several other reports about the dangers of the air near Ground Zero. In its evaluation, the EPA concludes that people in the surrounding area would likely not experience serious short- or long-term health effects from the airborne particles. However, the report also states that Ground Zero workers who were exposed to high concentrations of pollution may develop chronic illnesses, including those affecting the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. The release of this evaluation by your administration clearly shows that a need exists for investing more resources in more extensive monitoring of the health of the workers who were at Ground Zero.

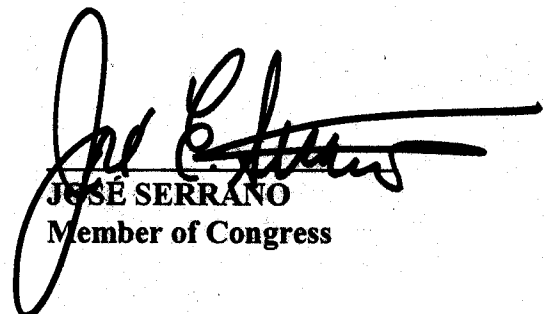
Therefore, we again ask that you reconsider providing the necessary resources to fully fund the program through the Mt. Sinai Center for Occupational & Environmental Medicine that would monitor the health of workers from Ground Zero.

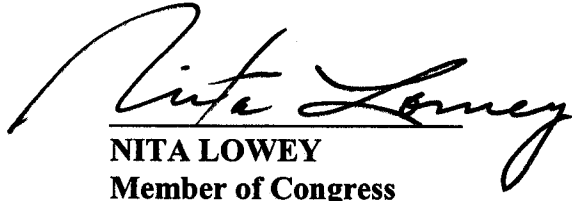
Additionally, we again respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss this important issue. To date, the New York delegation has met with you only twice to discuss the rebuilding of New York City following the terrorist attacks. As we have noted in each of three previous letters, we believe that the health of these workers is of extreme importance. Although Secretary Tommy Thompson sent a response to our first two letters, we do not believe that this correspondence adequately addressed our concerns or laid out a satisfactory proposal for helping the workers. We have attached two recent articles from the *New York Daily News* which emphasize how necessary a more comprehensive program is to the lives of these workers. No existing program offers the necessary health services to exposed workers and volunteers. The workers who selflessly risked their lives to save others deserve our help now.

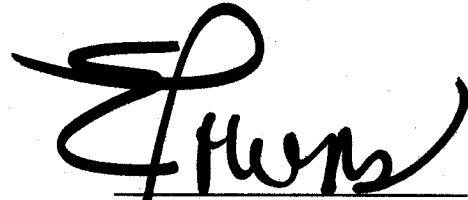
Thank you for your attention in this matter.


Sincerely,



CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


JOSÉ SERRANO
Member of Congress


NITA LOWEY
Member of Congress

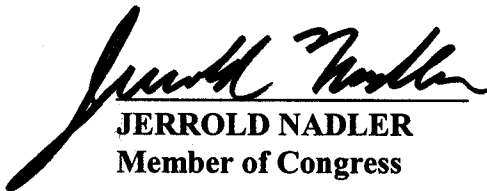

EDOLPHUS TOWNS
Member of Congress



VITO FOSSELLA
Member of Congress



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress

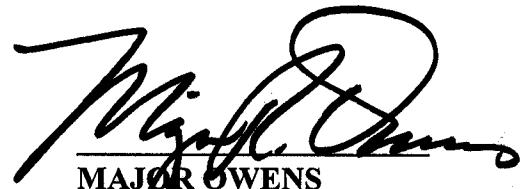

STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress

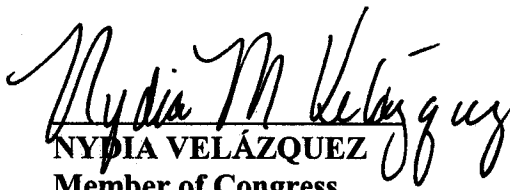

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Member of Congress

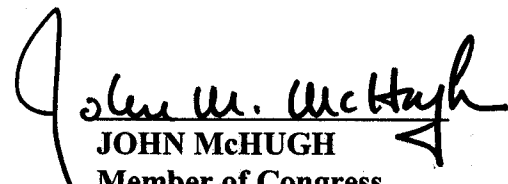

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress

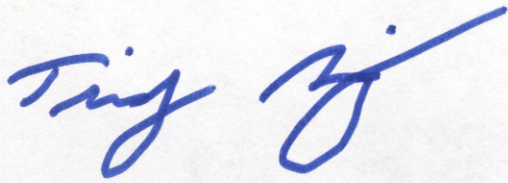

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Member of Congress


JOHN McHUGH
Member of Congress



TIMOTHY BISHOP
Member of Congress

WTC med care going to dogs

By HEIDI EVANS DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER Sunday, December 22nd, 2002

World Trade Center rescue dogs are getting better, more expensive and longer-term medical monitoring than World Trade Center rescue people.

A \$500,000 privately funded five-year study by the University of Pennsylvania is providing comprehensive medical workups for 131 dogs that searched the toxic rubble for survivors and remains at Ground Zero, the Pentagon and the Staten Island landfill. A dozen rescue dogs also will get free, annual, state-of-the-art \$1,200 MRIs of their nasal passages to check for early signs of cancer.

In addition, Veterinary Pet Insurance of California has donated lifetime medical policies to every rescue dog in the study, and FedEx is transporting hundreds of lab specimens around the country at no cost.

Aid bill struck down

By contrast, President Bush vetoed a bill that contained \$90 million to monitor the long-term health of 35,000 rescue workers and volunteers who were exposed to toxic debris in the days and weeks after Sept. 11.

And the \$12 million the federal government gave for health screening at Mount Sinai Medical Center will be depleted in July. Only 9,000 rescue workers will have been seen unless more money is approved.

The Mount Sinai program costs about \$1,333 per person. The Penn study allocates about \$3,105 per dog.

"Are you kidding?" said Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) when told about the canine study. "I'm all for taking care of the dogs. ... But what is most important is that thousands of brave men and women who did not think twice about doing their part at Ground Zero need their health closely monitored, and the administration must provide the necessary funding to do so."

A Daily News story revealed last week that half of the 2,500 rescue workers and volunteers who have been screened by Mount Sinai doctors to date are plagued by posttraumatic stress syndrome, persistent coughs and lower respiratory problems.

Despite intense lobbying by Clinton and the New York congressional delegation, Bush vetoed a bill in August that would have provided the \$90 million for long-term health tracking, in part to detect certain environmentally linked cancers.

The possibility of cancer and detecting it early in rescue dogs is also a major concern to animal researchers.

"These dogs are an important resource and need to be taken care of," said Deborah Lynch,

executive vice president of the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation, which initiated the rescue dog study. "We owe them something for their heroic work."

The irony of paying more attention to dogs than humans is not lost on many, including the University of Pennsylvania veterinarian who is heading up the large-scale canine study.

"It is ironic," said Dr. Cynthia Otto, who spent eight days at Ground Zero with the Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue team, otherwise known as Riley, Willow, Logan and Bear. "What I breathed in at Ground Zero has implications for my health. No one is studying me, yet I'm studying the dogs."

"I hope we find nothing bad for the dogs, but if we do, I hope it's helpful for the people who were at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon," she said.

The dogs in Otto's study get a full battery of blood tests, X-rays and toxicology exams to see whether dangerous poisons such as lead and PCBs are present. The handlers also have been asked to fill out lengthy questionnaires about the dogs' behavior and medical history.

So far, toxicology tests have come back negative, Otto said. A separate study of 30 New York City dogs that worked at Ground Zero and the Staten Island landfill also is ongoing. Dr. Philip Fox of the Animal Medical Center on E. 62nd St. said these dogs are being examined for acute and chronic illness.

"The concern for the rescue dogs is admirable," said Dr. Stephen Levin, director of World Trade Center screening program at Mount Sinai. "But certainly the thousands of men and women who risked their health to try to save the lives of others deserve at least as much."

Brad Gair, a local official with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, told The News that only \$367 million remains in FEMA's budget for the city.

"New York has more needs than the remaining funds may permit us to cover," said Gair.

Steve Nolan, a Valley Stream, L.I., crane operator who was recently examined at Mount Sinai for respiratory problems, said he was disgusted that Bush had quashed the \$90 million.

"I'm not surprised that we are getting shortchanged," said Nolan. "It's politics as usual. You have to remember, the dogs are not going to sue."

Daily News (New York) December 20, 2002, Friday
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December 20, 2002, Friday SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. 56 Short of breath More than half the Ground Zero volunteers and rescue workers who have participated in a health-screening project are afflicted with persistent respiratory problems. But that screening for World Trade Center cough - as medical experts have dubbed it - will end in July. Washington must step in. Mount Sinai Medical Center is monitoring the health of 9,000 of the 35,000 laborers, firefighters, police officers, etc., who worked so tirelessly in rescue and recovery after 9/11. So far, 2,500 have been examined. As the Daily News' Heidi Evans reports, about half have asthma and bronchitis. Half have developed ear, nose and throat inflammations. Others suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder or severe heartburn from acid reflux, caused presumably by the WTC dust they inhaled. In July, the \$12 million allocated for this study will run out. A spending bill that included \$90 million to track the workers' health was vetoed by President Bush. Sen. Hillary Clinton and Rep. Carolyn Maloney have tried to get the administration to continue to fund the exams. So far, to no avail. After 9/11, the President stood amid the smoking ruins downtown and told the rescuers, "I can hear you." And now he turns a deaf ear? The Federal Emergency Management Agency has funded mental health services for the group, but Washington hasn't done nearly enough to safeguard their physical health. The attacks that awful September day were an act of war against the nation. The Ground Zero heroes responded unflinchingly and unhesitatingly. To abandon them now would be unconscionable.