

For Immediate Release
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Senator Clinton Lauds Commitment to Create Air Quality Task Force for Ground Zero

EPA Agrees to Clinton Proposal to Form Partnership to Address Air Quality Concerns in Lower Manhattan

Senator Has Concerns About Details, Funding

Washington, DC - In response to a hearing on World Trade Center air quality organized by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and chaired by Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman has committed to establish a Task Force on Indoor Air in Lower Manhattan. Senator Clinton called for an indoor air program as part of a five-point plan that she unveiled at the hearing, which was held in New York City this past Monday, February 11.

Administrator Whitman appeared this morning at another hearing of the Environment and Public Works Committee, where Senator Clinton commended Whitman for her commitment to establish the new Task Force. While recognizing the Agency's efforts in this regard, Senator Clinton also expressed concern about the lack of details regarding the Task Force's activities, as well as the identification of an appropriate funding source for the Task Force.

Clinton emphasized that it was "imperative that this Task Force conduct door-to-door inspections and indoor sampling within no less than a 10 block radius of Ground Zero."

"The Task Force should also operate a centralized location where the public can get information on whether their building has been tested or inspected, the results of those tests and clear guidance on cleanup requirements, resources available to pay for cleanups, and certified cleanup companies in the area," Clinton said.

"I believe the idea, as you had mentioned, of an indoor task force, is an important one, because that's one of the areas where jurisdiction is not clear," Whitman said. "I mean it's not a simple task, but it is one that we have to deal with particularly in light of the kind of challenge that we face now since September 11th."

Clinton thanked Whitman for a quick response to the concerns that were raised at the hearing on Monday, and stated that she looked forward to working with her on the new effort. As a first step, Clinton indicated that she would be working to set up a meeting as soon as possible between EPA and the city to make sure that the task force is underway as soon as possible.

Yesterday, Administrator Whitman wrote to Senator Clinton announcing that she would create a Task Force on Indoor Air in Lower Manhattan with local, state and federal partners. Whitman wrote, "Despite the City's best efforts to address indoor environmental issues, it is apparent that many concerns and challenges remain. I am committed to providing additional assistance to the City and its residents and stand ready to do so. In addition, as you suggested yesterday, I will be working with our local, state and federal partners to establish a Task Force on Indoor Air in Lower Manhattan, so that we can move as quickly as possible to address the remaining concerns we all share."

On February 11, Senator Clinton, along with Senator Joseph Lieberman, conducted a hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on Clear Air, Wetlands, and Climate Change in Lower Manhattan to address ongoing concerns regarding air quality at Ground Zero. It was at that hearing that Senator Clinton announced a five-point plan to address these concerns, including calling for the formation of an Indoor Air Program for Lower Manhattan.

The five-point plan includes:

- Passage of legislation to establish a permanent health monitoring system at disaster sites;
- Funding for long-term health registry to monitor Ground Zero workers and those who live, go to school, and work in lower Manhattan;
- Establishment of a World Trade Center indoor air program to provide more information about the testing, monitoring, and cleaning of office buildings, residences, and schools in lower Manhattan;
- Creation of a World Trade Center site clean air initiative to reduce harmful emissions from construction equipment;
- Application of lessons learned about air quality at Ground Zero to our homeland security plan, so that the nation can be better prepared to deal with potential future disasters.

Senator Clinton will continue to work with Senator Lieberman and other colleagues both on the Senate Environment Committee and throughout the Congress to address ongoing concerns with air quality and related health impacts at and around Ground Zero.

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Senator Clinton Outlines a Five-Point Plan of Action to Address Air-Quality Concerns

Senator Clinton calls for the following actions:

- ***Pass Legislation to Establish a Permanent Health Monitoring System at Disaster Sites.*** Senator Clinton will call on her colleagues in Congress to take up and pass S. 1621 which she introduced in the Senate on November 1 and which passed out of the EPW committee. This bill authorizes a program for the protection, assessment, monitoring, and study of the health and safety of community members, volunteers, and workers in a disaster area when there has been exposure to harmful substances.
- ***Provide Funding for the Immediate Establishment of a Long-Term Comprehensive Health Registry, Referral and Monitoring System of Ground Zero Workers and those who live and work in Lower Manhattan.*** Senator Clinton will call for additional funding in the Federal budget for the Center for Disease Control to build on the \$12 million that Senator Clinton secured in last year's budget.

This funding will help establish a long-term comprehensive health system to ensure that all workers who worked at Ground Zero are registered – both first-responders such as firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical personnel and construction workers who are working on the removal of debris. This registry will serve as a basis to track and monitor the health of workers, ensure that workers are referred to appropriate medical services, provide continuing education to medical personnel regarding the health of Ground Zero workers, and examine any potential long-term health impacts of working at Ground Zero over a twenty to thirty year time period.

In addition, this comprehensive health system will monitor a cross section of residents, children, office workers, and other vulnerable populations to track their health over time.

- ***World Trade Center Indoor Air Program.*** Senator Clinton will call on the Mayor to work with her to establish a World Trade Center Indoor Air Program to expand on existing indoor air quality testing and monitoring. This program will ensure that there is one central information point for the public to learn about testing, monitoring and cleaning of residential buildings, office buildings, schools, and other buildings in lower Manhattan. In addition to access to information, this program will ensure that the public receives the necessary guidance and assistance to clean-up buildings in lower Manhattan.

United States Senate

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**For Immediate Release:
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Senator Clinton Outlines 5-Point Plan to Address Ground Zero Air Quality Concerns

New York, NY – At a Senate field hearing in lower Manhattan today, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton outlined a 5-point plan to address Ground Zero air quality concerns.

The plan includes:

- Passage of legislation to establish a permanent health monitoring system at disaster sites;
- Funding for long-term health registry to monitor Ground Zero workers and those who live, go to school, and work in lower Manhattan;
- Establishment of a World Trade Center indoor air program to provide more information about the testing, monitoring, and cleaning of office buildings, residences, and schools in lower Manhattan;
- Creation of a World Trade Center site clean air initiative to reduce harmful emissions from construction equipment;
- Application of lessons learned about air quality at Ground Zero to our homeland security plan, so that the nation can be better prepared to deal with potential future disasters.

Today's hearing was conducted by Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator Clinton who are members of the Senate Subcommittee on Clear Air, Wetlands, and Climate Change. Senator Lieberman is chairman of this subcommittee.

"In the months following the tragic events of September 11, many of dedicated relief workers have been working and living at or around Ground Zero, and there are more and more concerns that these men and women have been exposed to hazards from the air," Senator Lieberman said. "We must determine what, if any, risks they now face, and ensure that they receive the aid they deserve. We also should ask ourselves how we responded to these terrible events, and how might we be better prepared if we are ever faced with a similar tragedy in the future."

Senator Clinton said, "Unfortunately, we do not really know what our firefighters, police officers, emergency workers and others have been exposed to as a result of their courageous efforts at Ground Zero, but it is our responsibility to find those answers. In order to stem any long-term health problems these workers may be suffering, we must take steps now to address these concerns. And we must ensure that the public is protected and given sound information about environmental quality around Ground Zero. We must also find out what health risks may exist for any individuals and families who live, work or go to school near Ground Zero. I am hopeful that this hearing will help shed light on these important issues."

[witness list attached]

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