



Senator Josh Hawley
115 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Eric Schmitt
387 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hawley and Schmitt,

On behalf of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, we urge you to vote against the confirmation of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Missouri Coalition for the Environment (MCE) is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to empower Missourians to protect their environment and health. MCE advocates for policies, regulations, and other protections that afford Missourians the highest degree of safety and health now and for generations to come. We appreciate your past and ongoing work with us in support of RECA expansion and advocacy on behalf of the radioactive waste issue in the St. Louis region, and hope you will consider our recommendation on this matter.

Much of the work we are able to do on a statewide level rests on the prudent implementation of national public health measures. We often use research and guidance from governmental offices such as the CDC, ATSDR, NIH, and FDA to inform our advocacy for environmental protection and public education on ecological matters. If appointed HHS Secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. would oversee these vital organizations, both managing their funding and wielding the authority to impact drug approvals, food safety standards, nutrition, disease surveillance, vaccination requirements, and healthcare. If Kennedy's online statements are to be believed, he plans on making agency staffing decisions based on individuals' support for his preferred healthcare treatments.¹ This sets a treacherous precedent given Kennedy's tendency to spread health-related disinformation.

Kennedy's repeated publicization of misinformation related to public and environmental health has caused significant harm. For instance, Kennedy has promulgated scientifically debunked, conspiratorial ideas regarding vaccines which have discouraged members of the public from receiving necessary immunizations. After a visit to Samoa in which Kennedy promoted anti-vaccination rhetoric, the U.S. territory saw an outbreak of measles that killed 83 people.² Should Kennedy succeed in

¹ [Robert F. Kennedy Jr on X](#)

² ['We learned the hard way': Samoa remembers a deadly measles outbreak and a visit from RFK Jr | Pacific islands | The Guardian](#)

promoting anti-vaccination measures within the CDC, there is a risk of subsequent outbreaks of preventable diseases which would impact the health and wellbeing of Missourians and our food systems.

Kennedy has also sown doubt in beneficial public health measures while promoting false cures for illnesses. For instance, Kennedy opposes the scientifically lauded addition of fluoride to water supplies,³ yet supports hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin as treatments for COVID-19 despite evidence against their efficacy.⁴ He has additionally promoted harmful race-based conspiracy theories regarding COVID-19 immunity.⁵ Given his public statements, Kennedy is likely to shift funding towards research and promotion of disproven health measures that he personally favors and away from necessary research to treat and prevent critical illnesses in the U.S.

Cabinet appointees bear crucial responsibility for the implementation of policies that impact the lives of Missourians. MCE frequently works with both representatives across the political spectrum on the local, statewide, and federal levels to protect clean air, water, sustainable food, conservation land, and public health. As such, we know that candidates qualified to oversee the implementation of public health policies can come from a multitude of backgrounds. However, Kennedy's distrust of scientific experts and promotion of public health conspiracy theories should disqualify him as a HHS secretary candidate. Instead of Kennedy, we support the appointment of a qualified individual with significant experience in public health to lead the HHS, regardless of party affiliation. To continue our work fighting for Missourians, we cannot have a Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services who doubts rigorous science and promotes disinformation.

Sincerely,



Maxine Gill
Policy Coordinator
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
mgill@moenvironment.org
(314) 727-0600, ext. 118

³ [Community Water Fluoridation – One of the 10 Greatest Public Health Achievements of the 20th Century | Blogs | CDC](#)

⁴ [The Dangers of Using Hydroxychloroquine and Ivermectin for Preventing or Treating COVID-19 | South Carolina Department of Public Health](#)

⁵ [RFK Jr: Fact-checking his views on health policy](#)