

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 1, 2017

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Mattis,

We write to you today in order to continue the conversation on the contamination of public and private drinking water wells near the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster, the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Horsham, as well as the Horsham Air Guard Station in Pennsylvania.

First, we would like to thank you for your prompt response to our letter dated June 9, 2017 requesting the 2001 memorandum on the Aqueous Film Forming Workshop. The information was certainly helpful in better understanding the conversations being had between your department and relevant stakeholders on what chemicals were deemed most appropriate in 2001. Within the provided letter, the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Force Protection, Curtis Bowling, explains the toxicity of PFOS and the desire to find a replacement in either telomer or PFOA after the workshop. When reviewing new chemicals to take the place of PFOS, why was the decision made to only review PFOA and certain telomer chemicals, instead of expanding the search to Alcohol-Resistant AFFF technology or PYROCOOL/NOVACOOL Fire Extinguishing Foam (FEF)? Many of these technologies were invented before 2000, and began production by the time of this workshop.

The current version of Department of Defense (DOD) MILSPEC M-F-24385F, Section 3.2 Materials, states “Concentrates shall consist of fluorocarbon surfactants plus other compounds as required to conform to the requirements specified hereinafter. The material shall have no adverse effect on the health of personnel when used for its intended purpose.” Even in 2001, it would appear this MILSPEC has not been followed, as the use of PFOS/PFOA has indeed caused adverse effects on the health of personnel when used, including the runoff, being the contributing factor for the groundwater being contaminated. How can PFOS, a chemical known to be harmful, even back in 2001, can be chosen for use when the MILSPEC itself states any such material cannot be harmful during its intended use?

Our offices appreciate the Department’s recent commitment to ensuring the safety of our service members when reviewing new products for use in Class B fires. We respectfully request a comprehensive update on the Department’s progress toward selecting a safe and effective alternative to PFOS/PFOA-containing AFFF, and how Congress may be of assistance to you and the rest of the Department of Defense with this matter moving forward. Our goal remains swiftly and comprehensively addressing the contamination that is currently impacting the communities we represent in addition to the many hundreds of impacted communities nationwide, and preventing an issue like this from occurring again.

Thank you for your time and ongoing commitment to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress