

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 10, 2018

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 22202

Dear Secretary Mattis:

We write to express our concerns with the Department of Defense's response to addressing groundwater and surface water contaminated by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at and around defense installations across Michigan. Expedited action is needed to address these contaminants that pose a threat to human health and the environment.

PFAS are chemicals used in firefighting foams at military bases around the country with impacts to human health that are not well understood. Studies have associated PFAS exposure to cancer, as well as thyroid, kidney, reproductive, and heart issues. In the Fiscal Year 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congress included \$310 million for environmental remediation at Base Realignment and Closure bases, \$54 million above from the previous fiscal year. The bill report specifies that this additional funding should be used to address PFAS contaminated sites. In addition, the Army Guard base maintenance account also received \$40 million more than the previous fiscal year's level, which can be used for investigating and remediating PFAS contamination.

In 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established new lifetime health advisories for two types of PFAS – perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) – to assist federal, state, tribal and local officials with protecting public health when these chemicals are present in the drinking water. In addition, the State of Michigan's cleanup criteria for groundwater protective of drinking water was established on January 10, 2018. Furthermore, the State of Michigan has Water Quality Standards that apply to both surface waters and to groundwater venting to surface waters. Michigan regulations specify that water quality standards shall be met in all waters of the state, and that these standards sufficiently protect both human and aquatic health.

PFOA and PFOS have been discovered in and around multiple active and decommissioned military installations across Michigan, including: Wurtsmith; Camp Grayling; KI Sawyer; Selfridge; Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center; Escanaba Defense Fuel Supply Point; Battle Creek; Grand Ledge; and Kincheloe. The State of Michigan has estimated that it will cost upwards of \$335 million to investigate and address initial remediation actions at sites near the bases at which the contamination originated.

It is imperative that the Department of Defense comply with Michigan's water quality standards and cleanup criteria and stop the movement of contamination from military installations into groundwater and surface waters. While we appreciate the challenges of addressing emerging

contaminants such as PFAS, as well as the costs the military faces in addressing environmental contamination at bases throughout the United States, we are concerned about the pace at which the Department is proceeding to address contamination across Michigan. In addition, it has come to our attention that the Department may be considering changing its policy on compliance with individual state drinking and surface water standards for some contaminants, including PFAS. We would have great concern if in fact the Department or any of the individual branches were considering this action. Communities in Michigan are not at fault for the release of these harmful contaminants, and it is imperative that the Department do whatever is necessary to address the public health and environmental risks associated with exposure to these chemicals.

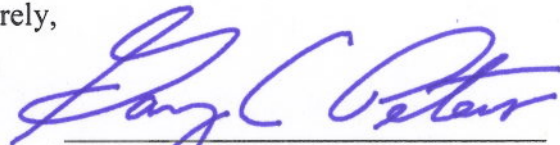
We look forward to receiving your response on the Department's near- and long-term plans to address these public health and environmental problems in Michigan. In addition, we would also ask that you provide additional clarity on whether the Department is considering changing its policy on compliance with state drinking and surface water standards for PFOA and PFOS.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Heather Wilson, Secretary, U.S. Air Force
The Honorable Mark Esper, Secretary, U.S. Army
The Honorable Lucian Niemeyer, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy,
Installations and Environment