

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2017

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chair
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John McCain
Chair
Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support Senate NDAA, Section 343, Centers for Disease Control Study on Health Implications of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in Drinking Water

Dear Chairmen Thornberry and McCain and Ranking Members Smith and Reed:

As you work to finalize a conference agreement, we urge you to retain Section 343 contained in the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018. Section 343 would authorize \$7 million to launch a nationwide health impact study conducted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in FY2018 on the most prevalent perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). Our service men and women, veterans, and other affected constituents deserve answers about how they and their children may have been affected by these chemicals, which the Environmental Protection Agency classifies as emerging contaminants.

Beginning in the 1970s, more than 600 U.S. military fire training sites used Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF), a firefighting foam that contained PFOA and PFOS. Testing conducted by the Department of Defense at many of these sites has found groundwater levels of PFOA and PFOS that exceed EPA guidelines. In fact, a 2016 study by researchers at Harvard University's Chan School of Public Health and Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences found that public drinking water for six million Americans exceeds the EPA's lifetime advisory limits for perfluorinated chemicals.

Because of the broad scope of PFOA and PFOS use by entities including the U.S military, contaminated drinking water now poses a nationwide public health threat. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), PFOA is especially problematic "because it can stay in the

environment and in the human body for long periods of time.” Numerous peer-reviewed studies indicate health dangers of perfluorinated chemicals, including links to testicular, kidney, and thyroid cancer and impaired immune system performance. However, ACS says “more research is needed to clarify these findings,” because a comprehensive, long-term study of the health impacts of PFOA and PFOS has not yet been conducted.

That is why we see a clear and pressing need for a longitudinal ATSDR study of this serious public health concern. Our service men and women, veterans, and other constituents who have been exposed to perfluorinated chemicals deserve answers on both the short- and long-term health impacts of these contaminants. Such a study’s findings could give them information they need to take proactive measures, such as more frequent cancer screenings, to protect their own and their children’s health.

Unfortunately, these emerging contaminants were used at sites across the United States. Hence, now that we have established that groundwater contamination exists and that the current body of evidence indicates a clear danger of long-term health risks, we urge you to support the Senate’s language in Section 343 calling for a Centers for Disease Control study on the health implications of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances contamination in drinking water. In addition, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly supported an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act to fund this study if it is authorized. By launching this much-needed study, we can begin to remedy past mistakes with this \$7 million investment in our troops, our veterans, their families, and affected civilians.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Carol Shea-Porter
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Daniel Kildee
Daniel Kildee
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress