

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 13, 2009

The Honorable B.J. Penn
Acting Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C., 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Penn,

We are writing in response to new information that has surfaced regarding human exposure to volatile organic compounds in Camp Lejeune's drinking water. This new information calls into serious question the validity of the 1997 Public Health Assessment (PHA) conducted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

On April 9, 2009, one of our constituents and his advocacy group found progress reports undertaken by a Department of the Navy (DON)-hired contractor in 1984 that showed high levels of benzene in an operating well located on Hadnot Point (well 602) before it was disconnected from the water distribution system on November 30, 1984. We are under the impression that this finding was previously not made public, nor provided to ATSDR. We note that ATSDR omitted benzene from its 1997 PHA. It is our understanding that this finding was one of the underlying reasons why ATSDR retracted the water contamination portion of its 1997 PHA on April 28, 2009.

It has also come to our attention that the DON and United States Marine Corps did not provide certain documents to ATSDR or the public until 2007. Both documents are included as attachments: BUMED 6240.3(B), dated September 30, 1963, and Base Order 5100.13B, dated June 27, 1974.

Nothing is more important than protecting the health and quality of life of our military personnel and families. Victims and their families have been patiently waiting for closure on this issue for over two decades. There have been persistent delays in ATSDR's epidemiological studies and water modeling. The inability to provide key documentation delays the completion and accuracy of these studies.

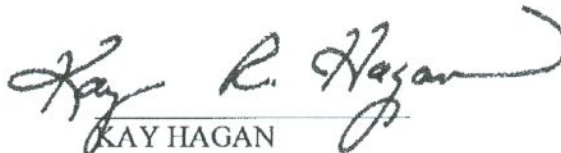
We request to meet with you and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment to determine why these informational gaps occurred. We also want to know what measures you are taking to ensure that ATSDR expeditiously obtains all relevant information to answer our constituents' questions about the contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BURR
United States Senator



KAY HAGAN
United States Senator

Enclosure(s):

1. BUMED instruction 6240.3(B)
2. Base Order 5100.13B