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November 21, 2016

The Honorable Miranda A.A. Ballentine
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment, and Energy
1665 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Assistant Secretary Ballentine:

First, I want to thank the U.S. Air Force for re-establishing the Wurtsmith Restoration Advisory Board. I hope that by reestablishing the Board, there will be increased communication between the Air Force, residents in Oscoda, Mich. and local and state governments.

While I welcome this progress, I continue to have significant concerns that the people near the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base (WAFB) do not have access to safe drinking water in their homes as result of contamination from perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs). While at the time of use, little was known about the negative effects of PFCs. As more research is being done it is becoming clear PFCs have serious health impacts. And it is now the Air Force's responsibility to ensure that people with contaminated water have access to safe drinking water.

At the Air Force's public meeting on October 25, 2016, Oscoda residents near the former WAFB asked many questions that the Air Force was unable to answer. This lack of information and transparency is unacceptable. After more than two years since discovering the widespread contamination of PFCs in groundwater surrounding WAFB, the Air Force needs to show more attention and urgency to this issue.

Thus, I ask that the Air Force give complete answers to the following questions:

- On multiple occasions, the Air Force has stated that it is prevented from providing impacted residents with safe drinking water unless contamination levels reach the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Health Advisory levels for PFC compounds perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).
- At the recent public meeting, the Air Force indicated another PFC compound present in the water near WAFB, perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), is being studied and will likely also show negative health impacts. If scientific evidence is published showing negative health impacts from ingesting PFHxS, will the Air Force act to provide safe drinking water to residents with the PFC compound PFHxS in their water?

- What are the width, depth and movement of the PFC plume? How long will it take to have a complete map of the contamination? Has the Air Force asked for technical expertise from the U.S. Geologic Survey to determine the scope of PFC contamination?
- What is the Air Force doing to make sure the PFC contamination near WAFB does not spread?
- The most recent plume map shows contamination traveling under Van Etten Lake and up to Lake Huron. Are there studies of the impact in and under Lake Huron? Will the Great Lakes face potential contamination from PFCs released at WAFB?
- Currently, the Air Force has pumping stations around WAFB designed to control earlier identified contamination plumes of trichloroethylene, dichloroethylene, benzene and other contaminations. The Air Force has been using those same pumping stations to treat water containing PFCs. Are the current pumping stations adequately sequestering the PFC plume on base? What are the PFC levels coming in and out of each pumping station? What effects are the effluents having on the watershed and Lake Huron?
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality tested water in fire hydrants sealed when WAFB closed. The test results show water with PFC concentrations above the EPA's Health Advisory level. This indicates that residents living on the base were potentially exposed to PFCs in their water at concentrations above the EPA's Health Advisory level. Is there an effort to reach out to former service members and their families who lived at WAFB to conduct a health survey and provide healthcare for conditions associated with PFC exposure?

I look forward to receiving your response to these questions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Dan Kildee
MEMBER OF CONGRESS