

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2018

The Honorable Robert R. Redfield, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road SE
Atlanta, GA 30329

The Honorable Patrick Breysse, Ph.D., CIH
Director
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road SE
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Director Redfield and Director Breysse:

We write to you today regarding the proof-of-concept model study at the Pease International Tradeport in Portsmouth, NH, and the national multi-site study on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). We are disappointed by the announcement that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), acting through the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), will not include military and civilian firefighters in its investigations of the human health implications due to PFAS contamination pursuant to Section 316 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018. As ATSDR continues its evaluation on the negative effects PFAS, we urge you to take additional steps to ensure that the health implications of occupational exposure to these chemicals, particularly in firefighters, are sufficiently studied.

As you are aware, PFAS chemicals are a byproduct of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF), a fire suppressant agent, and have been linked to a number of adverse human health effects. The potential ties between PFAS and various forms of cancer are of particular concern to military and civilian firefighters across the country who may have experienced long-term occupational exposure to PFAS due to the use of AFFF in firefighting and fire training exercises. Several studies, including a multi-year study completed by CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)¹, indicate that firefighters are at a higher risk of cancer compared to the general population in the U.S.

We understand this issue is of critical interest to the Administration and were encouraged to see NIOSH's 2016 report², which included recommendations on how to reduce firefighter exposure to AFFF. However, additional action is needed to determine the occurrence and severity of PFAS exposure experienced by firefighters and whether prolonged contact with this class of contaminants is a contributing factor to the high incidences of cancer observed in this group.

Section 316 of the NDAA authorizes ATSDR to conduct such a study, directing the agency to investigate the human health implications of PFAS contamination "in drinking water, ground water, and any other sources of water and relevant exposure pathways," which would include exposure pathways experienced

¹ Daniels RD, Kubale TL, Yiin JH, *et al.* Mortality and cancer incidence in a pooled cohort of U.S. firefighters from San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia (1950–2009) *Occup Environ Med*, 2013. DOI: 10.1136/oemed-2013-101662

² NIOSH [2016]. Health hazard evaluation report regarding Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Fire Department's exposures to aqueous film forming foam and perfluorochemicals, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH.

by firefighters. We applaud ATSDR's progress in implementing Section 316, including publishing in the Federal Register proposed methods to study the health effects of drinking water exposures to PFAS at the Pease International Tradeport. However, as the underlying statute does not confine the agency's research to drinking water, we request CDC and ATSDR ensure that future studies investigating the negative associations between PFAS and human health include relevant chemical exposure pathways experienced by firefighters and others who may come in contact with these contaminants in an occupational setting.

Firefighters are a vital component of our nation's emergency response system and risk their lives to protect the communities they serve. There is a critical need to better understand how PFAS workplace exposure among firefighters may affect the health of these heroes and their families. We thank you for your attention to this important matter and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



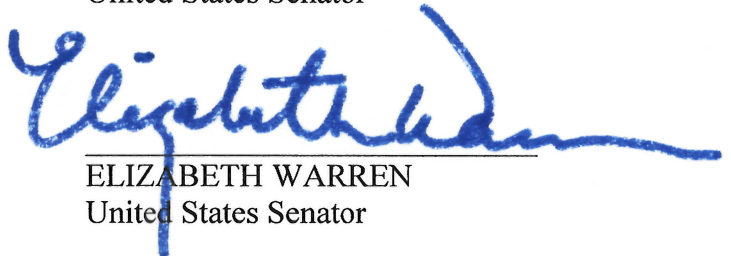
JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator



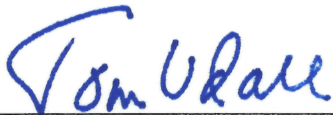
LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



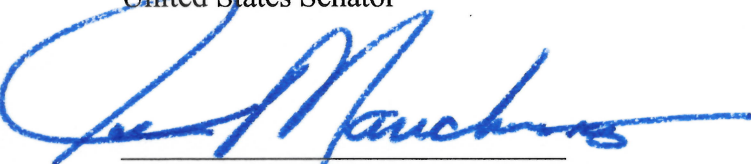
ELIZABETH WARREN
United States Senator



TOM UDALL
United States Senator



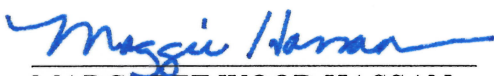
DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator



JOE MANCHIN III
United States Senator



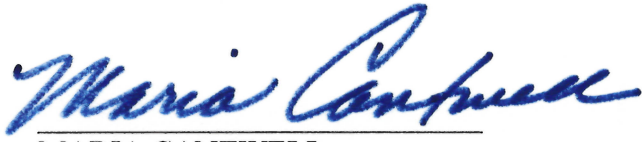
SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator



MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
United States Senator



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator



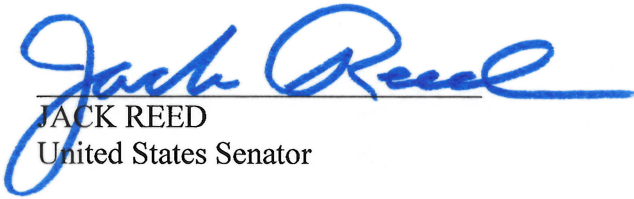
THOMAS R. CARPER
United States Senator



SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator



MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator



JACK REED
United States Senator



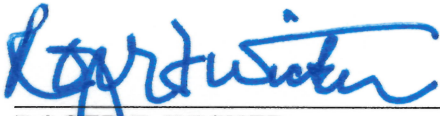
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO
United States Senator



PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator



GARY C. PETERS
United States Senator



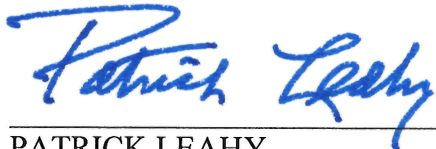
ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator



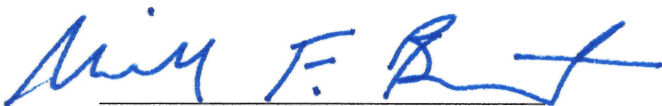
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator

CC: Dr. John Howard, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
Dr. Francis Collins, National Institutes of Health
Dr. Norman Sharpless, National Cancer Institute
Mr. Andrew Wheeler, Environmental Protection Agency