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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

ELISSA SLOTKIN
7TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

August 11, 2023

Dr. Bill LaPlante
Undersecretary for Acquisition and Sustainment
3010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Undersecretary LaPlante,

Thank you for taking the time on July 19 to discuss the Department of Defense's ongoing efforts to address PFAS contamination in Michigan. I write today to urge the Department of Defense (DoD) to implement additional Interim Remedial Actions (IRAs) to address PFAS contamination at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Michigan. Specifically, I ask that the Department implement IRAs at the four, distinct contaminated areas identified by the Oscoda community expert team from Need Our Water (NOW) and by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) in their correspondence with the United States Air Force (USAF) on February 15, 2023.

As you know, PFAS contamination poses an imminent and substantial threat to human health and the environment. Unfortunately, the communities surrounding the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base have had to deal with these threats for too long. Though the Air Force became aware of PFAS contamination at Wurtsmith over thirteen years ago, finalization and implementation of a comprehensive remediation plan is still likely years away. The Department can and must do more to protect the impacted communities today.

To that end, NOW, EGLE, the Iosco County Board of Commissioners, and the Oscoda Township Board of Trustees have repeatedly requested additional interim measures be taken by USAF to protect individuals and the environment from PFAS contamination from the base. Most recently, in a February 15, 2023 letter to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Chief of BRAC Program Management Division, EGLE requested implementation of four additional Interim Remedial Actions at the following locations: (1) Wastewater Lagoons and Seepage Beds (WWTP) near

Clark's Marsh, (2) Three Pipes Drain, (3) the area designated as "DRMO," and (4) Landfills 30 and 31.

In light of the dangers posed by PFAS exposure, I was pleased to see the July 11, 2023 memorandum released by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment instructing DoD Components to "assess where an interim action can be taken to mitigate further PFAS plume migration or ongoing impacts to groundwater, surface water, and/or sediment, from an on-base PFAS source area" and to "prioritize implementation of interim actions as expeditiously as possible to address PFAS under CERCLA, such as removal of soil or sediment 'hot spots' and installation of groundwater extraction systems, where supported by site-specific information." I believe implementation of the four IRAs at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, as requested by NOW, EGLE and local municipal officials, would turn the words of the July 11 memorandum into action and would reflect the Department's commitment to supporting defense communities and cleaning up PFAS contamination.

Thank you for your consideration. I have hope, based on our meeting, that you can help lead us into a new era of transparency and action in and around Wurtsmith. I stand ready to assist you with these actions in any way I can.

Best,



Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress