



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 10 2019

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

I am writing to follow up on your question concerning whether the Department of Defense (DoD) is seeking to weaken the cleanup standard for perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA) during the Senate Armed Services Hearing on March 14, 2019. The short answer is no. The Department takes its cleanup responsibility seriously and undertakes these actions in an open and transparent manner. Our priority is to quickly address the presence of PFOS and PFOA in drinking water that resulted from DoD activities.

The Department has proactively addressed PFOS and PFOA following the longstanding Federal cleanup statute, known as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). As such, the Department is not seeking a different or weaker cleanup standard, but supports the use of the long-established CERCLA risk-based cleanup approach based on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) implementing regulations. This approach is based on sound science and applies to everyone and every chemical, nationwide. Using the EPA risk assessment process, the unacceptable risk to human health for cleanup of groundwater with PFOS and PFOA is approximately 380 parts per trillion (ppt).

Additionally, there is a Lifetime Health Advisory (LHA) of 70 ppt for PFOS and PFOA that was established by the previous Administration. The LHA applies to drinking water but considers all PFOS/PFOA exposures over a lifetime. Therefore, the LHA is not a cleanup level.

DoD supports EPA issuing regulatory standards for PFOS and PFOA that help ensure a consistent and nationwide cleanup process. For example, the EPA has initiated the regulatory process to identify PFOS and PFOA as hazardous substances. It is clear PFOS and PFOA is a serious environmental concern that needs a comprehensive, national regulatory solution.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress on this important matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick M. Shanahan".

Patrick M. Shanahan
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Martin Heinrich