

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 22, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

We write to express great concern about the Department of Defense's (DoD) delayed cleanup of per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination at military installations across the country. We request that the DoD revert to the cleanup timelines released in December 2024. DoD should also expedite cleanup for the sites with estimated dates that have already passed on the December 2024 timetable. As you know, PFAS are synthetic "forever chemicals" linked to serious health harms, including increased cancer risks, adverse reproductive effects, and developmental effects or delays in children. For years, our defense communities have suffered from the consequences of this contamination due to DoD operations. The DoD has a serious responsibility to these communities, including service members and their families, whom DoD-caused PFAS contamination harmed.

In December 2024, DoD released a timetable for investigative actions needed for PFAS cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). We were alarmed to learn about DoD's recent publication of a new timetable, which delays these actions and prolongs DoD's cleanup of PFAS pollution at nearly 140 sites.¹ In some cases, there will be a delay of nearly a decade. There are more than 723 military installations and their surrounding communities across the nation that are or may be contaminated with PFAS chemicals. The contamination has had far-reaching consequences, which include the widespread pollution of drinking and groundwater, fish and wildlife, and blood tests that reveal PFAS levels that are multiple times the national average in residents living near bases. Even farmers and ranchers have lost their livestock to the contamination. This serious and widespread PFAS contamination requires timely cleanup and adequate resources.

Delayed PFAS cleanup is unacceptable. DoD must commit to the soonest possible actions to protect servicemembers, their families, and the surrounding communities of contaminated military installations. Our defense communities deserve transparency about this decision and any future decisions that may impact their health and safety.

We request answers to the following questions:

1. What factors went into the decision to delay cleanup timetables for installations being assessed for PFAS contamination?
2. Who made the decision to delay the cleanup timetables?
3. Did DoD consult with or incorporate feedback from the impacted bases and surrounding communities when changing the cleanup timetables?
4. Did DoD notify the impacted bases and surrounding communities of these changes and their impacts?

¹ Tabuchi, Hiroko. "Defense Department Delays Cleanup of 'Forever Chemicals' Nationwide." *The New York Times*, 30 Sept. 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/09/23/climate/military-defense-pfas-forever-chemicals-cleanup-delay.html.

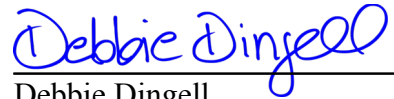
5. Why did DoD not announce the new cleanup timetables?
6. If the new dates are a result of changes in funding levels, please specify those changes and funding sources.
7. Was the most recent timetable change caused by DoD reprogramming funds?
8. Does DoD plan to discuss with and explain the reasons for the delayed cleanup timetables with the impacted bases and surrounding communities?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



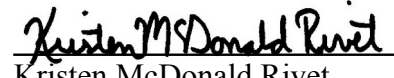
Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



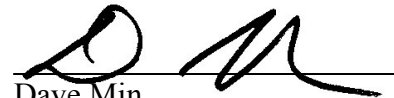
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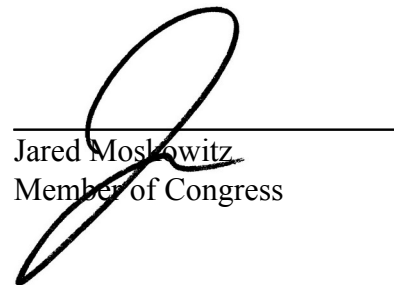
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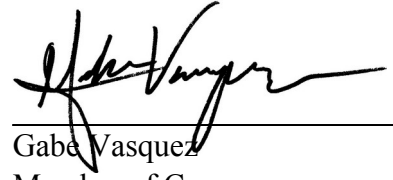
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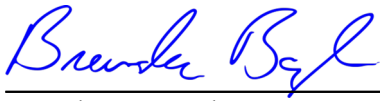
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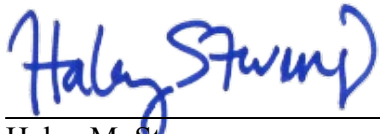
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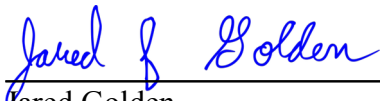
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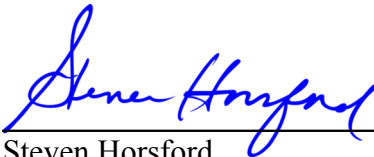
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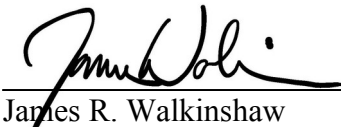
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



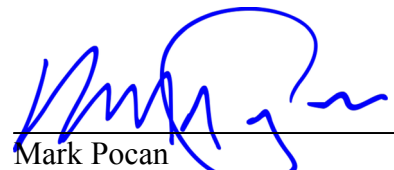
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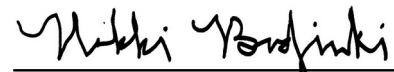
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