Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 4, 2024

The Honorable Robert P. Storch
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Inspector General Storch:

We are writing to request a comprehensive report demonstrating how the Department of Defense's (DoD) efforts to remediate harmful per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have progressed, with a particular focus on military sites and surrounding communities in Michigan.

PFAS chemicals remain a grave danger to the health of our constituents. Residents in Michigan communities with former and current military bases continue to suffer the consequences of their decades-long exposure to these toxic forever chemicals. While we are pleased that some Interim Remedial Actions (IRA) are underway at these sites, we remain concerned about the health and well-being of residents in these communities.

In 2019, members of Michigan's congressional delegation sent a letter to then DoD Acting Inspector General Glenn Fine, requesting a review of the DoD's use of PFAS at military sites around the country and the exposure to both military personnel and civilians living near those sites. While we appreciate the resulting report from the DoD OIG, many questions remain unanswered.

Therefore, we request an updated analysis of the DoD's efforts to address PFAS contamination at former and current military bases that build on questions originally brought to your office's attention in 2019:

1. What methodology is the DoD using to determine the scope of the problem and how to allocate its resources to address it?
    a. Has the DoD updated this methodology to account for the new maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) and if so, how? If not, what is the timeline and plan for updating the methodology as soon as possible?
    b. As PFAS bioaccumulates, how is the DoD sampling fish and benthic organisms within the food web in nearby bodies of water to determine the extent of contamination that could impact human health?
    c. How is the DoD sampling at each site to determine the highest concentrations of PFAS as well as the complete plumes of contamination? To what extent is vertical aquifer sampling and sampling at the groundwater-surface water interface prioritized?

d. When collecting and reporting plume data to determine the scope of the problem, how and when does DoD determine whether that data is dated and needs to be updated?

2. Can you describe what work the DoD has done with service members, their families, and impacted communities to remediate drinking water contamination and mitigate health risks?
    a. What public engagement strategies have been effective? Where does the DoD need to improve collaboration?
    b. How does DoD determine the most technically competent staff to discuss remedial actions during technical sessions with Restoration Advisory Boards and communities? What expertise and familiarity with the site must they have?

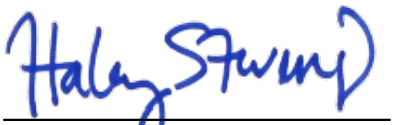
3. What is the DoD's plan to discontinue the use of PFAS chemicals?
    a. The Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act prohibited the DoD's use of fluorinated aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) on military installations by October 1, 2024, unless the Secretary of Defense waives the prohibition of use. Has DoD met this timeline, and if not, what more needs to be done to achieve this requirement?

4. Can you describe the DoD's efforts and future plans to rapidly mitigate the further spread of PFAS and clean up current PFAS contamination in the environment, including in soil, groundwater, and drinking water?
    a. How is the DoD prioritizing its cleanup strategy within each contaminated site, including across its sites currently undergoing interim remedial actions (IRAs)?
    b. How is the DoD investing in research to identify novel ways to efficiently remediate PFAS contamination in water, soil, or other media, and what plans if any are in place to test and implement these technologies when available?
    c. How is the DoD ensuring that filtration technologies such as granular activated carbon, ion exchange resins, and other inorganic treatment strategies are properly disposed of after use to prevent water and soil contamination?

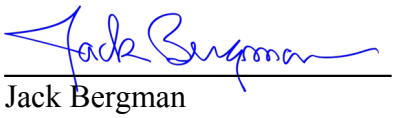
Sincerely,

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

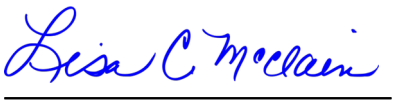
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



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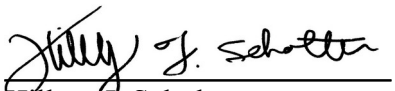

Hillary J. Scholten
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