

November 12, 2019

Honorable James Inhofe, Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe,

We, the undersigned non-governmental organizations, are deeply troubled by proposals to remove critical provisions related to per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, from the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020.

Military communities, military firefighters and active duty servicemembers are among the most vulnerable to the risks of PFAS pollution—which include cancer, reproductive and developmental harms, and immunological effects. The Department of Defense (DOD) has required the use of PFAS in military firefighting foams for fifty years and estimates that there are more than 400 known or suspected military sites contaminated with PFAS. So far, PFAS has been detected in seven communities in Oklahoma, including six military installations.

Our military communities deserve better. Congress should take action to reduce or eliminate ongoing sources of PFAS pollution, identify the extent of contamination, and quickly remediate PFAS pollution. To that end, as Congress finalizes the FY2020 NDAA, we urge you to retain provisions that would quickly end military use of PFAS in firefighting foam and food packaging; require ground and drinking water quality monitoring for PFAS; require reporting of industrial discharges of PFAS; ensure safe and effective disposal and destruction of military PFAS wastes; limit industrial discharges of PFAS; set health-protective drinking water standards that protect vulnerable populations, including children; and provide funding for additional studies, data sharing, and remediation.

In addition, we urge you to designate PFAS as “hazardous substances” under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. The DOD has cited the absence of a “hazardous substance” designation when refusing to clean-up legacy PFAS pollution on or near military installations. Furthermore, we urge you to accelerate PFAS cleanups at military facilities through the use of cooperative agreements.

Our organizations urge you to support efforts to address PFAS contamination through the NDAA for FY 2020 and will oppose enactment of an NDAA that fails to address ongoing and legacy PFAS contamination.

Sincerely,

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