

STATEMENT OF
REPRESENTATIVE BRIAN FITZPATRICK OF PENNSYLVANIA'S EIGHTH DISTRICT
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MARCH 2, 2017

I would like to start off by thanking Chairman Granger, Ranking Member Visclosky, and members of this subcommittee for holding this hearing. I am here today on behalf of Pennsylvania's eighth congressional district and their support for Department of Defense (DoD) funds to be allocated to a comprehensive health study and remediation effort of public and private wells contaminated by perfluorinated compounds, namely perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS).

Nearly 70,000 Pennsylvanians may have been exposed to levels of PFOA and PFOS exceeding the Lifetime Health Advisory levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These chemicals have been reported in public and private drinking wells at and around the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster and former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Horsham, as well as the Horsham Air Guard Station. These contaminants have also been found in communities surrounding over 600 military installations nationwide. PFOA has heavily impacted communities such as Hoosick Falls, New York.

PFOS, PFOA, and other emerging contaminants are unregulated compounds being sampled for the first time in public water systems. The EPA uses the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule to collect data for contaminants suspected to be present in the drinking water. In the summer of 2014 as a result of an EPA effort to test for emerging contaminants, concentrations of PFOS and PFOA were found to exceed the EPA's Provisional Health Advisory levels (400 ppt) in several onsite monitoring wells. The U.S. Navy and Air National Guard in conjunction with the EPA expanded groundwater sampling in my district to include private and public offsite wells. In May 2016, the EPA released a Lifetime Health Advisory (70 ppt) on the chemicals. Since then, 22 public wells and over 140 private wells have been shut down due to high levels of PFOS and PFOA.

The military does not dispute its responsibility for the well contamination in Horsham, Warrington, and Warminster areas of my district. It is suspected that high levels of PFOS and PFOA originated from firefighting foams used on the Naval and Air National Guard bases since the 1970s. The Navy has spent at least \$19 million and the Air National Guard has spent at least \$8.3 million in remediation efforts, which included the installation of Granular Activated Carbon filtration systems on public wells, bottled water for residents with private wells, home connections to public water systems, and paying for replacement water from neighboring public water systems.

That said, the Department of Defense should work with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health to conduct a comprehensive study related to the long term health impacts of PFOA and PFOS. My constituents have a right to safe, clean drinking water and they deserve to know if PFOS and PFOA have compromised their long-term health. I urge you to include funding for the Department of Defense to conduct a long-term health study on the impacts of PFOS and PFOA. These studies will aid the federal government in

conjunction with state and local agencies to reverse the contamination and protect the health and welfare of our residents.

Additionally, I urge the committee to appropriate funding that allows the Department of Defense to fund the cleanup and remediation of PFOS and PFOA. While the U.S. Navy and Air National Guard have worked in conjunction with the affected municipalities in supplying clean water to residents, the decision for public water suppliers to purchase uncontaminated water from the surrounding communities resulted in the water customer bearing the cost.¹

Again, thank you for your time and consideration. A low-cost, commonsense study will go a long way in providing Americans critical information about the impact these unregulated chemicals may have on their health. We look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

¹ http://www.theintell.com/news/horsham-pfos/blood-boiling-over-warminster-water-rate-hike/article_3aa72666-708e-11e6-b579-7fc763886913.html