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Congress of the United States
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July 31, 2012

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary
The U.S. Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

The Honorable Joseph Martens
Commissioner
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Administrator Jackson, Secretary Mabus, Commissioner Martens:

I am writing to urge you to take all requisite action to stop the migration of the contaminated groundwater plume emanating from the former Grumman Aerospace Corporation and U.S. Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant Sites in Bethpage, New York.

The U.S. Navy and Grumman operated a 645-acre facility in Bethpage, New York for several decades. The Navy and its contractor, Grumman Aerospace Corporation, used this site to make notable contributions to assist the Allies in winning World War II. However, in addition to this remarkable legacy, the Navy and Grumman unfortunately left behind soil and groundwater contaminants, including trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE), known carcinogens. A 4.5-mile long by 3.5-mile wide plume currently threatens over 20 public drinking wells that serve over 250,000 Nassau County residents in the Bethpage, South Farmingdale, and Massapequa water districts. This water supply is designated by the EPA as Long Island's Sole Source Aquifer.

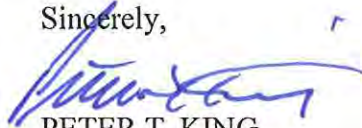
The agency with oversight, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), and responsible parties, the U.S. Navy and Northrop Grumman, have been unable to cooperate on a plan to contain the plume, which has been permitted to grow since it was first identified in 1976. The appointment of a federal master by the EPA would ensure that the parties cooperate to finally contain the contamination.

The Navy and NYSDEC continue to favor post-contamination wellhead treatment. This process of building treatment systems after water has been contaminated is currently utilized in Operable Unit 2 and was proposed in NYSDEC's May 2012 PRAP for Operable Unit 3. Local water districts oppose this policy. Not only does this policy do nothing to stop the growth of the plume, but it forces local water districts to wait for the pollution to enter clean wells, pay for treatment, and then await reimbursement from the responsible parties. The cleanup of the groundwater contamination is not unfeasible; rather, it is a matter of financing. I urge the U.S. Navy to take all requisite action to ensure that the migration of the contaminated groundwater be stopped and that the local taxpayers do not foot the bill.

The Navy/Grumman site has been designated a New York State superfund site. However, the adjacent Hooker Chemical/Ruco Polymer site is an EPA superfund site. The EPA has recognized that the groundwater beneath the Hooker/Ruco site has commingled with the groundwater down gradient and beneath the Navy/Grumman site. It is logical that the EPA also become the lead agency for the Navy/Grumman plume. An EPA master would cut through the red tape and ensure that a containment plan is enacted expeditiously.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I would appreciate The EPA, U.S. Navy, and NYSDEC keeping me regularly informed of new developments regarding Bethpage.

Sincerely,



PETER T. KING
Member of Congress