

June 23, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairman
The Honorable Richard M. Burr, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

We, the undersigned, are writing to you in support of S. 277, the "Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act of 2011." This much-needed legislation addresses the severe and ongoing health problems of the veterans and their families who were exposed to water contaminated with toxic chemicals at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

For decades, servicemembers and their families drank and bathed in water contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as trichloroethylene (TCE), a pollutant from metal degreasing sites, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning solvent, along with a host of known and probable human carcinogens including benzene and vinyl chloride. These chemicals, which pose serious risks to neurological, reproductive and fetal development, have no place in the drinking water of any American let alone our Marines and their families.

Newspapers have reported that more than 60 men who had lived on base have been diagnosed with breast cancer, and advocates have pointed to high incidences of birth defects and childhood illnesses including leukemia as evidence of in utero exposure to those toxic chemicals found at Camp Lejeune.

We strongly support the efforts of Senators Burr and Hagan to ensure that health care be provided to those affected by the harmful effects of this contamination. After almost 30 years of government inaction, these Americans have waited far too long for the proper care and treatment they deserve.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ken Cook, President
Environmental Working Group

Brandy Bynum, Director for Policy and Outreach
Action for Children North Carolina

Monique Harden & Nathalie Walker, Co-Directors
Advocates for Environmental Human Rights

De Rogers Fox, Executive Director
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David Foster, Executive Director
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Nancy Buermeyer, Senior Policy Strategist
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