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July 19, 2012

Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

I am writing to request that the Environmental Protection Agency provide information on the health risks of repeated exposure to commercial herbicides and other defoliants used at CFB Gagetown starting in 1956. During that time, American service members trained at the base and were exposed to the herbicides.

According to the Canadian Department of National Defence's report, "Environmental Site Assessment of CFB Gagetown," forty different herbicides made up of 24 active ingredients were used, including some with manufacturing impurities. There remains ambiguity as to the potential health impact of these herbicides, including the impurities, Agent Orange/Purple and Agent White. I have heard from veterans who are concerned with how these herbicides interacted with environmental and biological factors and whether or not they would have been potent enough to impact the health of Reservists training at CFB Gagetown in the 1980s.

The Reservists interacted with their environment intensively. Much of the activity included digging in the soil and breathing dust. While the Department of Veterans Affairs maintains that the toxins did not pose a risk, the Reservists' remain concerned that their training exposed them to significant levels of commercially available herbicides and dioxins present in Agent Orange/Purple and Agent White.

Maine National Guard members traveled to Gagetown on a regular basis for artillery training, which included live firing into the impact ranges. This live firing created large dust clouds that were breathed in by the Reservists. Numerous herbicides were used on the impact ranges to control fires that might be caused by artillery rounds impacting in the ranges, and the Reservists believe they were exposed to these herbicides and dioxins as a result of the dust clouds.

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In light of the extensive use of herbicides and the Reservists unique exposure to these chemicals, I am requesting that the EPA provide information on:

1. The standards of use for the commercial herbicides used at CFB Gagetown and whether amounts sprayed during the training periods and the Reservists' interaction with their surroundings meets those standards; and
2. Whether the Agent Orange/Purple, Agent White and the chemical impurities present at CFB Gagetown during the Reservists' training posed a health risk, specifically when the Reservists' were breathing in contaminated soil disturbed by digging.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be assistance. Emma Glidden-Lyon on my staff can provide an electronic copy of "Environmental Site Assessment of CFB Gagetown" to help provide the details of herbicide use and training location. She can be reached at 202-225-6306 or emma.gliddenlyon@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress