



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU**  
Governor

November 4, 2020

The Honorable John Henderson  
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
Energy, Installations and Environment  
1160 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-1160

Dear Assistant Secretary Henderson:

I am writing concerning the impacts of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") contamination at the former Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on the water supplies of private homes located in nearby Newington, New Hampshire. As you know, the water supplies of these homes have been shown to be contaminated with PFAS, specifically perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), at concentrations that exceed the drinking water maximum contaminant level and ambient groundwater quality standard that New Hampshire has established for this chemical of 15 parts per trillion.

I have reviewed the U.S. Air Force's (USAF) recent response to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' (NHDES) request to provide safe, alternate water for these impacted homes. In a September 2, 2020 letter from Dr. Stephen TerMaath, the USAF declined to do so, stating that New Hampshire's standards would not be honored, and that drinking water mitigation would only be provided where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) health advisory of 70 parts per trillion is exceeded. I have also reviewed your recent correspondence with members of our congressional delegation who inquired on this matter. Your letter restates this position, and acknowledges that New Hampshire's more protective standards will be reviewed for potential applicability only as part of a remedial investigation that will likely take at least two years to complete.

The USAF's position on this matter is troubling to me, and I urge you to reconsider. The families living in these homes should not have to wait two years or more for the USAF to determine whether they deserve safe drinking water. Accordingly, I have directed staff of the NHDES to offer bottled water to these homes and to mobilize our state contractors to arrange for their connection to existing public water systems or installation of point-of-entry treatment, as

appropriate. We are using State resources to complete this work, but I strongly believe that this is and should be the responsibility of the USAF. To that end, I am formally requesting that the USAF, as the responsible party, reimburses the State of New Hampshire for any costs incurred for the work completed as part of connecting these households to clean drinking water.

New Hampshire acknowledges and appreciates the extensive work done to date by the USAF to address human health exposures at the Pease site. In that context, I hope that you will give this matter the careful consideration that it deserves. We look forward to your response and continued collaboration with us and USEPA on response actions at Pease.

Sincerely yours,



Governor Christopher T. Sununu

cc: Robert Scott, Commissioner, NHDES  
Stephen TerMaath, Ph.D., P.E., Chief - BRAC Program Management Division, AFCEC  
Major General David Mikolaities, The Adjutant General