

# SENATORS URGE NAVY TO FUND CAMP LEJEUNE STUDIES

**Wednesday, December 9, 2009**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Senators from North Carolina and Florida today sent a letter to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus urging the Navy to commit to funding critical Centers for Disease Control (CDC) studies on contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune. A complete copy of the letter is attached.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is an agency under the CDC charged with scientific studies designed to find answers regarding dangerous chemicals in the Camp Lejeune drinking water over several decades. The Navy has not committed to fund a comprehensive mortality study, as the ATSDR has requested. The mortality study is crucial to understanding whether Camp Lejeune residents were affected by contaminated water. Costing approximately \$1.8 million, it is the least expensive of the studies and will examine whether there is a correlation between higher mortality rates for active duty marines who served at Lejeune during the years water was contaminated.

"These studies are integral to a comprehensive understanding of the effects stemming from human exposure to the contaminants at Camp Lejeune," wrote Senators Kay R. Hagan (D-NC), Bill Nelson, (D-FL), Richard Burr (R-NC) and George LeMieux (R-FL). "We have an obligation to the men and women who serve our country and their families to investigate this matter to the full extent. We therefore strongly urge you to commit to full funding of the ATSDR 2010 Annual Plan of Work without further delay."

In October, Hagan and Burr amended the Senate Defense Appropriations Bill to prohibit the Navy from disposing of water contamination claims before these scientific studies can be completed. That bill is currently in a conference with the House of Representatives.

Hagan, Nelson and LeMieux have cosponsored Senator Burr's Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act of 2009 (S. 1518). The legislation would open access to Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) health care for veterans and their family members that lived on the base during the years of water contamination. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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