

HAGAN, BURR CAMP LEJEUNE AMENDMENT PASSES SENATE

Friday, October 2, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Supporting Marines and their families who were exposed to toxic chemicals at Camp Lejeune, U.S. Senators Kay R. Hagan (D-NC) and Richard Burr (R-NC) last night amended the Defense Appropriations Bill to prohibit the Navy from disposing of water contamination claims before critical scientific studies can be completed.

"Our amendment makes the desire of the Senate perfectly clear: the Navy should not dispose of claims until the scientific studies are complete," said Hagan, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "I believe that, before we can move forward in this matter, the remaining CDC studies into water contamination at Camp Lejeune must be completed. Marines and their families, who were exposed to dangerous chemicals in the Camp Lejeune drinking water over several decades, deserve to know how that exposure impacted their health."

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), an agency of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is conducting human health and water modeling studies to determine whether water that was contaminated with toxins, at concentrations up to 280 times what is currently considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), may have contributed to health problems faced by Marines and their families stationed at Camp Lejeune between 1957 and 1987.

Last month, Burr and Hagan met with Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway on the longstanding water contamination issue at Camp Lejeune, and expressed their desire for the Navy to fully fund the remaining CDC related studies.

In July, Burr and Hagan introduced the 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.