

# **NEWS FROM CONGRESS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JANUARY 15, 2010**

**CONTACT:**

**Michelle Begnoche (Stupak), 202-225-4735**

**Adam Benson (Dingell), 202 225-4071**

**LuAnn Canipe (Miller), 202-225-3032**

## **DINGELL, STUPAK, MILLER CALL ON NAVY TO FUND CAMP LEJEUNE STUDIES**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – U.S. Congressmen John D. Dingell (D-MI), Bart Stupak (D-MI), and Brad Miller (D-NC) sent a letter today to Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus regarding an unresolved dispute with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Diseases Registry (ATSDR) over funding of health studies related to the contaminated drinking water at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. The Navy has failed to provide funding requested by ATSDR for a cohort mortality study and a health survey as required by law. ATSDR has stated the cost of the mortality study at \$1.5 million. The health survey's full cost has not yet been determined. The letter and ATSDR's full request can be found attached to this release.

The Congressmen state in their letter the Navy is obligated by law to pay for these studies. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act – commonly known as the Superfund statute – states that the liable party (the Navy, in this case) is obligated to pay for the health studies the ATSDR administrator deems necessary.

The letter also expressed concern that the Navy continues to delay efforts to provide a more meaningful understanding of the health problems incurred by former Camp Lejeune residents.

The cohort mortality study is particularly important, according to the ATSDR, because “it is the most time-efficient and scientifically valid method to study the health consequences of adult exposures to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune.”

Said Congressman Dingell, “It is a regrettable fact that this is not the first time the Navy has shirked its responsibility to provide answers to its Marines and their families exposed at Camp Lejuene. I expect real answers from the Navy about what part of the Superfund statute is not clear in their obligation to pay for these very important studies. After years of dealing with this issue, including through hearings in the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Marines and their families deserve answers now. In fact, they deserved them a long time ago.”

“It is quite clear that the law in this case is on the side of the employees at Camp Lejeune and their families,” Congressman Stupak said. “As the primary health authority, ATSDR has deemed these studies necessary. The Navy has responded by dragging its feet and refusing to pay for the studies – a decision that flies in the face of clear requirements under Superfund statutes. Those affected by hazardous substances at Camp Lejeune deserve action, not delay tactics and stonewalling. I encourage the Navy to focus its efforts on meeting obligations to these men and women in a timely manner rather than finding ways to circumvent critical health studies.”

Said Congressman Miller, “I would prefer if the Navy did the right thing for the right reasons. Fortunately the law requires any polluter, including the Navy, to pay for the studies necessary to find out how much harm has been done to innocent people,” said Miller. “The law doesn't make victims of toxic exposure, or the ATSDR, beg polluters for justice and the necessary funding; the law gives them rights.”

###