



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

September 10, 2012

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

Thank you for your cosigned letter to the President regarding Veterans and their families who were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with volatile organic compounds at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune between 1957 and 1987. President Barack Obama has asked me to respond on his behalf.

On August 6, 2012, the President signed into law the "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012" (Public Law 112-154). Section 102 of the law gives the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to provide medical care for certain conditions to Veterans and their family members who resided or were stationed at Camp Lejeune for 30 or more days from 1957 through 1987. It is unclear exactly how many people were potentially affected by the water contamination at Camp Lejeune; however, some estimates place the number at one million Veterans and family members.

The Department has begun to implement this new law. VA provided guidance to field facilities shortly after the law's enactment to ensure staff was prepared to help eligible Veterans seeking health care. In addition, after VA receives specific appropriations for the medical care of family members, as required by the law, and publishes implementing regulations, the Department will begin providing care to family members as well. I have instructed VA staff to provide you with regular updates as we progress through the regulatory process.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission. A similar response has been sent to the other cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Eric K. Shinseki

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VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER BURR