

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Five members of Congress today sent a bipartisan letter to the Department of the Navy questioning its commitment to transparency regarding Camp Lejeune’s contaminated drinking water. North Carolina delegation members U.S. Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Kay R. Hagan (D-NC) and Representative Brad Miller (D-NC), along with Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Representative John Dingell (D-MI) ask the Department of the Navy to immediately provide the public with accurate information.

“We would like to bring to your attention several issues that call into question DoN’s and USMC’s commitment to transparency and veracity in efforts to keep the public informed of ongoing developments related to Camp Lejeune’s historic contaminated drinking water,” the Members of Congress wrote to Department of the Navy Secretary Ray Mabus.

The Members wrote that they are concerned with the Marine Corps’ continued reliance on the 2009 National Academy of Sciences’ National Research Council (NRC) report, which downplays the link between the contaminated water and adverse health effects. Yet, the NRC report did not assess the presence of benzene, a known carcinogen, in the water. Nonetheless, the Marine Corps continues to tell the public that benzene was evaluated.

“Given this clear mischaracterization by DoN and USMC regarding the content and conclusions of the 2009 NRC report in DoN and USMC correspondence and on DoN and USMC websites, we request that DoN and USMC immediately correct all official correspondence sent to the public and all information present on DoN and USMC websites where USMC states that benzene was assessed in the 2009 report, as well as issue a new letter to registrants referencing this correction.”

The full letter, available [here](#), also calls on the Department of the Navy and U.S. Marine Corps – before releasing anything to the public – to coordinate with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the agency Congressionally-mandated tasked to finally provide answers to Marines and their families about health effects from the contaminated water. The lawmakers wrote that this continued lack of coordination was evident in the Marine Corps’ publication of the pamphlet “Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water: Questions and Answers,” which understates the potential hazards from the contaminated drinking water and misleads the public.

“We request that USMC immediately retract the booklet from its website,” the lawmakers wrote.

Burr, Hagan, Miller, Nelson and Dingell have been working for years across the aisle to help find answers for families who were formerly residents of Camp Lejeune. Burr, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, sponsored, and Hagan and Nelson cosponsored, the Caring

for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act. The bill would open access to VA health care for veterans and their family members who have developed health problems after being exposed to contaminated Camp Lejeune water. Miller sponsored and Dingell cosponsored the House version of the bill.