



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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LT. GOVERNOR

September 22, 2020

The Honorable John Henderson
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
Energy, Installations, and Environment
1160 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-1160

Dear Assistant Secretary Henderson:

I write to urge the United States Air Force to comply with State of Michigan standards for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the clean-up efforts at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base near Oscoda, Michigan.

Since taking office in January of 2019, I have prioritized cleaning up our drinking water and protecting public health and the environment. I strengthened the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART), a multi-agency effort to identify and remediate PFAS contamination throughout Michigan, and increased state funding for drinking water projects, including PFAS research and remediation. In the absence of federal drinking water regulations for any PFAS, I directed the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to set Michigan's own science-based drinking water standards. The resulting standards represent input from a diverse group of stakeholders who helped EGLE shape regulations that are practical, science-driven and, most importantly, protective of public health. The regulations, which also strengthen Michigan's existing groundwater clean-up criteria for the two most frequently detected PFAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), are some of the nation's most comprehensive regulations limiting PFAS contamination.

The State of Michigan expects that the Air Force will meet Michigan's PFAS clean-up standards. Since EGLE first identified PFAS concentrations in groundwater at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, the State has been committed to protecting the Oscoda community and working to clean up PFAS contamination. The Air Force, which operated the base for years and is responsible for the Wurtsmith clean-up, has shown renewed efforts to expand interim actions at the site. However, it is long past time for the Air Force to commit to an aggressive clean-up plan and engage in extensive interim actions to stop the spread of PFAS contamination at and around Wurtsmith.

As you know, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) process requires close coordination and agreement between the Air Force and the State of Michigan. In the current phase of the CERCLA process for the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, state clean-up standards are to be formally considered in the development of the long-term actions. To that end, on September 18, 2020, EGLE provided the Air Force a list of its identified state applicable and relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) for the remedial investigation, including the interim remedial actions, for the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base (attached). I ask that the Air Force carefully review EGLE's list of ARARs and commit to apply these standards to ensure the clean-up protects public health and the environment.

Like all Michiganders, residents living around Wurtsmith deserve to know we are prioritizing their health and safety. I am encouraged by the recent willingness of the Air Force to implement interim actions that begin to address concerns that the State and the Oscoda community have long expressed, but there is much more work to be done to minimize continued spread of PFAS contamination, remediate harm, and protect the Oscoda community. I am committed to working with our strong partners in the Michigan Congressional

delegation to ensure that the Air Force is accountable and adequately funded to accomplish all of the interim and long term actions needed to address PFAS contamination at the Former Wurtsmith Air Force Base.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gretchen Whitmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan

Attachment

cc: Liesl Clark, Director, EGLE