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Washington, DC – The U. S. House of Representatives has passed an amendment to H.R. 5136, the National Defense Authorization Act, which will take the next step in ending the legacy of toxic water contamination at the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

Health officials estimate that as many as one million former Camp Lejeune Marines and their families were exposed to the tainted water. Reports indicate between 50 and 60 men who served at Camp Lejeune have been diagnosed with breast cancer. In addition, the contaminants found in the water – TCE, PCE, and benzene -- are linked to cancer, liver damage, birth defects, and leukemia, among other things. The contaminated wells were shut down 23 years ago; yet, we still do not have answers to the public about the link between the exposures and illnesses.

One of the keys to getting answers is the ability to provide the public accurate scientific studies. However, to date, the Navy has not provided the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) with all data, documents, and records related to the water contamination during the 30-year contamination period from 1957 to 1987. Moreover, new, critical information continues to surface about benzene showing that Marine's exposure to benzene was far greater

than previously thought. Without all information, the ATSDR won't be able to reach scientifically accurate conclusions.

**Congressmen John D. Dingell (D-MI15), Bart Stupak (D-MI01), and Brad Miller (D-NC13)** offered this amendment so that the Navy would be required to share its information with ATSDR in a timely fashion. Specifically, the amendment requires the Secretary of Defense to provide ATSDR with an inventory within 180 days of its existing documents pertaining to the water contamination and use its health and environmental personnel to assist ATSDR in gathering this information (a more detailed summary can be found below). The members leading the fight on this amendment made the following remarks on the House vote.

**Rep. Dingell** said about the vote: "Tonight's vote gets us just a bit closer to the truth about the link between the illnesses and exposures. It is unfortunate we must require something as simple as this by statute. But 23 years after the contaminated wells were shut down, we have had enough delay from the Department of the Navy. Allowing ATSDR to move forward with its human health studies is vital to at last getting closure for our poisoned patriots. Our fighting men and women risked everything for their nation; they deserve honest answers and America's full support in return."

**Rep. Miller** added: "ATSDR's health studies must rely on having accurate data about what people were exposed to, as well as where and when these toxins were in the water. If you don't get the water modeling right, you can't do the rest of the studies. We are at a crucial point – we must get this right now."

Rep. Stupak, who as chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, held a hearing on the contaminated water well at Camp Lejeune, said: "After more than six years, ATSDR has yet to receive a comprehensive record of documents needed to complete a comprehensive health study on the effects of water contamination at Camp Lejeune. This situation is simply unacceptable, and the Marines and their family members who were stationed at Camp Lejeune deserve better. The time has come to stop the charade and send a clear message that Congress expects federal agencies to respond to our servicemen and women who have suffered from the Camp Lejeune contamination."

Summary of Dingell/Stupak/Miller Amendment to H.R. 5136 – National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011.

The amendment requires the Secretary of Defense to provide the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) with the following information pertaining to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune's historic drinking water contamination no later than 180 days after enactment:

an electronic inventory of all existing document, data, and records in its possession and update the inventory based on new documents, data, and records generated or discovered by Secretary of the Navy; and all existing data, documents, and records pertaining to the contaminated water present at Camp Lejeune

In addition, the amendment requires the Secretary of the Navy to ensure personnel within the Department of Defense with the appropriate environmental expertise are utilized to identify, compile, and submit existing and new documents, data, and records that will assist ATSDR in gathering data relating to the contamination and remediation of Camp Lejeune base-wide drinking-water systems.

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