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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**ELISSA SLOTKIN**  
8TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

July 25, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of the Army  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as Secretary of Defense. I very much look forward to working with you in your new capacity.

I want to thank you for your prompt attention to the immediate challenge per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination poses to many of our communities. I raised this issue when we met on May 1, 2019, and I have continued to advocate through the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act process for the Department of Defense (DoD) to take action to clean up existing contamination caused by DoD facilities and to prevent future contamination. I am pleased to hear you have acknowledged this concern and have stood up a Task Force to develop an “aggressive,” “holistic,” and “DoD-wide approach” to address PFAS contamination around military installations and surrounding communities across the United States. This remains a top priority for me as a Member of Congress from Michigan and as a Member of the House Armed Services Committee.

According to a report recently released by the Environmental Working Group, Michigan has 196 known contamination sites across the state – more than any other state in the country. While home in Michigan earlier this month, I toured Strawberry Lake, part of the Huron chain of lakes, where foam resulting from PFAS build-up is visible in plain sight. I also held a forum focused on PFAS contamination in Pinckney, Michigan, a community that has been under a “do not eat fish” advisory for nearly a year, and a “do not touch foam” advisory for the past few months. The more than 200 attendees expressed deep concern about the impact of PFAS contamination on their health, safety, and livelihoods, and had simple questions about how to know whether their water is safe to drink, eat fish from, or even touch. They were understandably eager to hear about what is being done to remove contamination. While the Department of Defense is by no

means responsible for all PFAS contamination, as you acknowledge, the Department must identify an effective approach for remediation where it has caused contamination.

I have benefited greatly from seeing these sites up close and would like to invite you, PFAS Task Force Chair, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment, and members of the Task Force team to visit Michigan to see the situation first hand and hear from victims of PFAS contamination. My team and I would be happy to help facilitate a visit.

As a Michigander and former Pentagon official, I know what an important role the Department of Defense has to play in PFAS contamination and clean-up in our state, and how hard it has been for the Department of Defense to accept responsibility for environmental clean up, given the use of aqueous film forming firefighting foam across the country. But we must address these issues, as environmental security is in fact homeland security, and it is clear that PFAS is a threat to our safety. When residents of the Great Lakes state, home to the greatest concentration of fresh water in the world, cannot hand our kids a glass of water with confidence that it is safe to drink, that is a threat to our way of life.

I appreciate your understanding that it is critical for the Department of Defense to take swift action to respond to this threat in Michigan and across the country. I look forward to hosting you in Michigan and I stand ready to work with you and your team to stem the flow, clean up, and prevent future PFAS contamination.

Sincerely,



Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress