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October 13, 2020

The Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite
Secretary of the Navy
The White House
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Braithwaite,

I write today to express my concerns over the disturbing results of recent drinking water well sampling conducted near Naval Support Activity (NSA) Cutler in response to the Navy's detection of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in concentrations above the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) lifetime health advisory level. I appreciate the Navy keeping my office and the people in Maine informed of this vital testing.

Following initial testing conducted in September of private well water within the designated area near the NSA Cutler Fire Station, my understanding is that as of October 1, the Navy received preliminary results indicating that samples from eleven private wells exceeded the EPA's lifetime health advisory level for PFOA/PFOS. Further, of the validated test results announced by the Navy, four off-base drinking water wells have exceeded that level. Additionally, testing of the well that provides drinking water to the NSA Cutler Fire Station indicated contaminants exceeding the advisory level, despite earlier sampling in 2016 that detected levels below the EPA threshold.

In instances when the preliminary results indicate levels of PFOA/PFOS above the EPA advisory level, the Navy has committed to providing bottled water for drinking and cooking to affected homes and the NSA Cutler Fire Station, and I urge you to continue that important support until a long-term solution is implemented. Please provide me an update on the Navy's long-term plans to monitor these drinking water sources and conduct remediation as necessary to ensure safe and clean drinking water for Mainers affected by these contaminants.

Congress has worked in a bipartisan basis to improve the Department of Defense's ability to address per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) containments and conduct environmental remediation when needed. For example, the Senate-passed Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act included additional funding for the study and removal of PFAS in the environment, including an adopted amendment I cosponsored with Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) authorizing an additional \$15 million for the PFAS study being conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is a matter of public health.

Thank you for your assistance, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator