

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 26, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We write to you to express our serious concerns regarding the Department of Defense's (DoD) timelines and delays in the cleanup and remediation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at DoD installations across the country. DoD recently published online an updated timetable and status chart detailing progress as of September 30, 2025.¹ Compared to the previous timetable detailing progress as of March 31, 2025, many DoD installations have significant delays. Many of us previously wrote to you in a letter dated November 19, 2025 with concerns about DoD's March 2025 timetable, which delayed cleanup schedules when compared to the timetable detailing progress as of December 2024.² We request that you reverse these delays. We also request that you respond to the below questions to provide Americans with transparency and ensure that cleanup at DoD installations will not be further delayed.

PFAS are a class of synthetic chemical substances that have been manufactured for decades for use in various industrial process and consumer products, such as aqueous firefighting foam. The strong chemical bonds in PFAS make them extraordinarily persistent in our bodies and the environment, earning PFAS the label of a "forever chemical." Furthermore, exposure to PFAS has been linked to a litany of public health risks, including various cancers, reduced immune function, reproductive challenges, birth defects, and thyroid problems.³

There are over 720 military sites with known or suspected PFAS contamination from DoD activities.⁴ Studies confirm that residents living near many of these sites have dangerously high levels of PFAS in their drinking water, putting them at risk for serious health issues linked to

¹ U.S. Department of Defense. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment. "Cleanup of PFAS." Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Last modified September 2025. <https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/data/cleanup-pfas.html>.

² *Stars and Stripes*. "Senate Democrats Pentagon PFAS Cleanups." November 19, 2025. <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2025-11-19/senate-democrats-pentagon-pfas-cleanups-19818665.html>.

³ "How PFAS Impacts Your Health," Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, July 22, 2025, <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/about/health-effects.html>.

⁴ "721 Military Sites With Known or Suspected Discharges of PFAS," Environmental Working Group, data current as of March 5, 2026, <https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/2020-military-pfas-sites/map/>.

PFAS exposure.⁵ As a nation, we must stand by our servicemembers and military communities to protect them from the health impacts of PFAS.

According to the most recent timetable, DoD has conducted 704 preliminary assessments/site investigations for PFAS contamination or potential release of PFAS, of which 588 installations are moving forward with remedial investigations.⁶ Many installations are now advancing from planned Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) work to underway. However, we remain greatly concerned by the staggering delays at some installations, which include over 170 installations with delays ranging from 1 year to over 20 years. Several installations have schedules where RI/FS work is no longer underway and is back to the planned stage. This is unacceptable. Communities around these installations must not be left behind, and remediation work cannot wait.

Furthering our concern is the fact that this most recent set of delays is backdated to September 30, 2025, raising the question of whether the Department has further expanded the breadth and extent of its delays in the previous nine months. The longer DoD takes to complete such remediation efforts, the greater the risk to public health and the environment in impacted communities.

We appreciate that this recent timetable and status chart provides five footnotes to help explain why cleanup schedules were modified or delayed for individual installations. Without a doubt, federal resources must address immediate and dangerous risks to human health and the environment. However, if not reversed, delays of this magnitude must also come with transparency, more specifics on these new timelines, an explanation as to which installations resources are being prioritized toward, and more local stakeholder engagement.

Once again, we request that you reverse these delays, and, in light of these concerns, please provide answers to the following inquiries by July 31, 2026:

1. When did DoD post the timetable and status chart detailing progress as of September 30, 2025?
 - a. How did DoD communicate with impacted installations and their surrounding communities to notify and inform them of any changes in their cleanup schedules?
 - b. Did DoD conduct any impact assessments or risk analyses to understand how these delays may further expose local communities to PFAS contamination?
 - c. If DoD posts a timetable and status chart in the future to update the progress made, will you commit to informing Congress and the respective committees when that happens?

⁵ Patricia Kime, “‘Forever Chemicals’ in Thousands of Private Wells Near Military Sites, Study Finds,” *KFF Health News*, November 29, 2023, <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/forever-chemicals-pfas-private-wells-military-bases/>.

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, “Cleanup of PFAS.”

2. For installations with footnote number 2 as the primary reason for delay, please explain the specific reason(s) these sites now require additional testing and fieldwork.
 - a. If this testing and fieldwork was not included in the RI/FS plan, then what did each DoD installation learn to justify the need to delay for more testing and fieldwork?
 - b. If conditions keep changing to justify additional testing and fieldwork, how will DoD ensure that conditions do not worsen as remediation delays continue?
3. For installations with footnote number 3 as the primary reason for delay, how many sites make up each installation and are the delays solely reflective of PFAS cleanup sites?
4. For installations with footnote number 4 as the primary reason for delay, please explain the reason(s) for the lengthy delays.
 - a. How did DoD decide on these delays?
 - i. Please provide more specifics and a breakdown of timelines and milestones for each installation.
 - ii. What RI/FS activities will occur over this period?
 - iii. What additional resources would be required by the DoD to minimize the delays?
 - b. What concrete steps, such as water quality monitoring, will DoD take at these bases to ensure PFAS contamination does not worsen?
 - c. Which other installations is DoD prioritizing to justify deprioritizing these installations?
5. For installations with footnote number 5 as the primary reason for a modified schedule, what concrete steps and stakeholder outreach is DoD implementing to ensure signing of a Record of Decision remains on time and not further delayed?
 - a. For example, Fort Riley in Kansas cites a 15-year delay to account for the gap between completion of the RI/FS and the Record of Decision. What is the justification for taking 15 years to complete stakeholder review?
6. When comparing this recent timetable and status chart to the March 2025 version, several installations have had their RI/FS status change from “underway” to “planned” with the estimated RI/FS end date removed (e.g. Redstone Arsenal in Alabama and Fort Greely in Alaska). Please explain this change for each instance.
7. What concrete steps will DoD take to accelerate these cleanup schedules or ensure these schedules are not further delayed?
8. To date, at which of these delayed sites has the Department initiated interim remedial actions? Will DoD be expediting ongoing interim remedial action at these sites? As for those delayed sites at which DoD has not initiated interim remedial actions, what are the Department’s plans for initiating such actions to prevent further migration of contamination into surrounding communities? Which sites can expect interim remedial actions to begin within the next two years?
9. Additionally, when comparing all timetables and status charts marking progress as of December 2024, March 2025, and September 2025, Navy installations have not yet experienced significant delays. Does DoD plan release another timetable and status chart that will modify and delay remediation schedules for Navy components?


10. Further, have the Department's RI/FS end date estimates changed for any the 723 installations being assessed for PFAS since September 30, 2025? If so, which sites have been delayed and to what extent?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



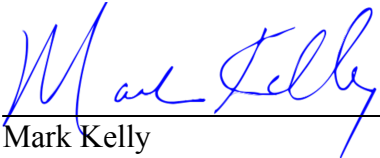
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



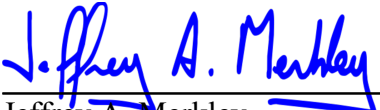
Elissa Slotkin
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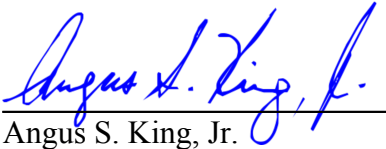
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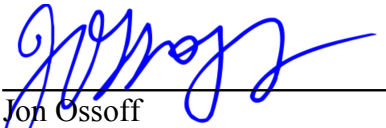
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



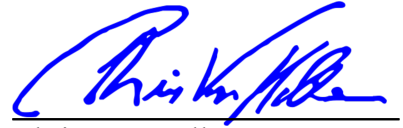
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



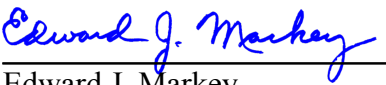
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Chris Van Hollen
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Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
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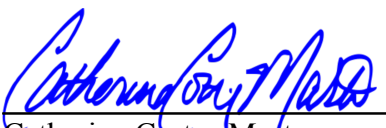
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Tammy Baldwin
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Catherine Cortez Masto
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