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House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

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June 4, 2018

The Honorable Daryl D. Metcalfe
Chairman-State Government Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
144 Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202012
Harrisburg, PA 17120

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Daryl'.

Dear Chairman ~~Metcalfe~~ and Committee Members:

For nearly 17 years I have represented constituents of the 144th legislative district. For the past four years, a portion of my district has been impacted by ground water contamination originating from the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and Air National Guard (ANG) in Willow Grove, PA. Just like many of my constituents, my family and I have bathed in, cooked with, and ingested this water for almost four decades.

The ground water contamination is extensive. In 2015, the Air National Guard (ANG) completed a ground water assessment identifying potential perfluorinated compounds (PFOS/PFOA) release sites that had contaminated public wells in the area including Warrington Township. The report also divulged more information regarding a pocket of contaminated water referred to as a "plume." This plume contained PFAS contamination at high levels, 50 to 200 feet below the ground surface. Since the initial report, levels of PFAS up to nearly 300,000 parts per trillion (ppt) have been found in groundwater, well above EPA's safe level of 70 ppt.

Warrington Township's public water tests are now close to zero detection because of the filters and additional water being purchased from the North Wales Water Authority (NWWA). North Wales Water Authority obtains over 95% of its water directly from the Delaware River. We are extremely fortunate that this resource is available to meet constituents demand for clean safe drinking water.

North Wales Water Authority serves more than 25,000 customers and processes up to 40 million gallons of water through their plant each day. Due to this high volume, NWWA routinely interacts with the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). If not for the positive interaction and relationship with DRBC, NWWA may not have been able to accommodate the additional demand for clean safe drinking water in such a timely manner.

I have been advised the House State Government Committee has scheduled a hearing on June 11, 2018 to investigate concerns regarding the impact of DRBC's policies and actions on business growth and economic vitality in the basin and on the rights of property owners within the basin. Frankly, it is because of the policies of DRBC that my constituents have an alternate source for water and as property owners, Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution provides they have the right to ground water, free from contamination.

*"The people have a right to clean air, **pure water**, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all of the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."* (Emphasis added)

As a legislator, I find myself in the fortunate position of being able to put forth solutions to aid communities and populations impacted by contaminated ground water. However, I do find it rather unfortunate that as we are all more aware of water contamination issues, whether due to horror stories miles away like Flint, Michigan or locally here in Bucks and Montgomery counties, that you would choose to hold a hearing to "investigate" DRBC, the very government agency that is integral part in providing relief to the tens of thousands affected by contaminated water.

For your convenience I have enclosed legislation introduced because of the PFOA/PFOS issue impacting my district. Should you have any additional questions, I can be reached at 717-787-5452.

Sincerely,



Rep. Katharine Watson
144th Legislative District

House Resolution 682

Adopted, April 9, 2018 - A resolution urging the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services to select the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Willow Grove, PA and the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster, PA for an exposure assessment and study on human health implications of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFASs") contamination.

House Bill 1398 – Introduced by Rep. Katharine Watson- to amend the act of October 18, 1988 (P.L.756, No.108), known as the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act. PFOS and PFOA are not currently listed as hazardous substances under Pennsylvania's Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA)

House Bill 1640 was introduced by Reps. Bernie O'Neill (R-Warminster) and Katharine Watson to help expedite state and federal assistance to municipalities with contaminated drinking water supplies. This would allow a Pennsylvania governor to make a declaration of disaster emergency, naming any community as a "special drinking water resource-impacted community" when analyses indicate the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in ground water or surface water measured at or exceeding 15 parts per trillion.