



**Senator Feinstein Urges Pentagon to Take  
Responsibility for Perchlorate Contamination**  
June 30, 2005

**Washington, DC** – Following the recent release of a critical Government Accountability Office report on the Pentagon’s failure to adequately address perchlorate contamination, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today called on the Department of Defense to take responsibility for the contamination it has caused and to take meaningful steps to clean up groundwater and drinking water sources.

Following is the text of a letter Senator Feinstein sent to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld:

June 30, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld  
Secretary  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am disappointed by the Defense Department’s lack of action and cooperation in addressing the perchlorate contamination issue as described in the recently released report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), “Perchlorate: A System to Track Sampling and Cleanup Results is Needed.”

The report identifies incidents where the EPA or State agencies asked the Department to sample for perchlorate but Department officials declined to do so because they did not believe that the conditions met the Department’s sampling policy. I do not believe the Department’s current sampling policy is sufficient to allow states to identify the true extent of the contamination problem and I am concerned that the policy does not do enough to prevent future contamination.

The Department’s sampling policy only requires sampling when a perchlorate release due to Department activities is suspected and when a pathway to human exposure is likely to exist. The perchlorate contamination on the majority of Defense sites in California, as well as throughout the United States, has led to contaminated groundwater; groundwater that serves as drinking water sources for the neighboring communities or as irrigation water for regional farmers. Groundwater contamination is a direct pathway to human exposure and the Department

should not be waiting until perchlorate has reached groundwater and drinking water supplies before it begins to sample.

Most of the perchlorate contamination across the country is from Defense-related activities and as such the Department has a responsibility to the American people to clean up the groundwater and drinking water sources impaired by those activities. The findings of the recent GAO report indicate the Department is failing to live up to that responsibility.

In a letter to the GAO, the Department referred to this report as “factually incorrect and fundamentally flawed” with respect to the information about the Department’s actions and policies on perchlorate sampling, cleanup, and notification to the EPA. I understand that the Department provided extensive comments to the GAO, and I would appreciate it if you would share a copy of those comments with me.

I am grateful for the collaborative efforts between the Department and the California Perchlorate Working Group with regard to the Prioritization Protocol for Perchlorate Impacts to Drinking Water from Defense Facilities in California and I look forward to seeing sampling and cleanup efforts proceed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I understand that your staff from the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment will be meeting with my staff next month and I look forward to having the concerns I have raised here be addressed at that time.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

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