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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

July 9, 2018

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

In March, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement that it would hold a National Leadership Summit to begin developing strategies for addressing pollution from Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), the agency shared its intention to hold meetings in communities that have been impacted by PFAS. The intent of these meetings would be to discuss how EPA can best support existing mitigation efforts at the state, local, and tribal level. I have heard from constituents from Dayton, Ohio, and surrounding communities who are concerned about PFAS contamination at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB), and I urge you to include an event in the region this summer.

For decades, Department of Defense facilities – including WPAFB near Dayton – used firefighting foams containing Perfluorooctance Sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA). In 2016, the Air Force began phasing out these legacy foams, to be replaced by a foam with a simpler chemical structure. While I applaud the Air Force's efforts to reduce the harmful impacts of firefighting foams, one of the most alarming chemical characteristics of PFAS is its persistence in the environment and in our bodies. This persistence means that PFAS contamination can continue to pose a threat to our drinking water for years after its last release.

Contamination at WPAFB is well-documented. In 2016, the base shut down two of its drinking water wells when samples showed that they contained 200 and 700 parts per trillion of PFAS respectively. This far exceeds the EPA's established health advisory of 70 parts per trillion. The base brought the two wells back online only after building a \$2.7 million water treatment facility.

While drinking water for base personnel is being treated, the surrounding communities are still at risk. The City of Dayton has shut down drinking water wells at Huffman Dam because of concerns about a contamination plume approaching from the base. While testing of the city's tap water has shown that it is safe to drink, the contamination plume continues to migrate away from WPAFB and toward the city. In fact, the City of Dayton's Department of Water is investigating methods to treat water from contaminated wells and make it safe to drink. The city has announced that it intends to seek compensation from the Air Force for these treatment efforts.

WPAFB has already taken significant action to protect its more than 27,000 service members and civilian employees from PFAS water contamination, and the City of Dayton is searching for solutions to prevent exposure in the community. As the EPA holds national listening and working sessions to inform its PFAS management plan, the longstanding ties between the City of Dayton and WPAFB present a unique opportunity to establish a national model of cooperation between Department of Defense sites and their surrounding communities affected by PFAS contamination.

I look forward to an EPA listening session in Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrod Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator