

Statement

by

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Good afternoon. My name is Laura Olah and I am representing Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger.

I live near a closing military base in Wisconsin that is one of the most contaminated defense sites in the nation. Expected remediation costs have been estimated as high as \$250 million. In my own community, decades of open burning of munitions wastes has caused the uncontrolled release of dioxin to our rivers and streams, to the surrounding farmland, and to nearby communities.

The U.S. military operates munitions test and training ranges covering tens of millions of acres of land and waters throughout the United States and beyond. Closed military ranges cover millions more acres. An estimated 1,900 formerly used defense sites and 130 Base Realignment and Closure Commission sites are known or suspected to contain unexploded ordnance. The Defense Science Board has estimated that over 15 million acres of land in the United States are potentially contaminated with unexploded ordnance. Every year, prescribed and accidental range fires on munitions sites across the country disperse dioxin and other toxins into the air and into our communities.

In addition to firing and training ranges, the military disposes of excess and unserviceable munitions through open burning and open detonation. These open burn/open detonation sites pose an additional concern as many of these units have historically been used to thermally treat industrial wastes such as PCB-contaminated paints, solvents, fuels and treated wood pallets which may result in the release of dioxin.

From the start of military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. military and its contractors have burned solid waste in open burn pits. Only last week, the U.S. Government Accountability Office issued a report documenting that service members are being exposed to harmful emissions which assuredly includes dioxin. Earlier this year, New Mexico issued a letter of intent to deny a permit for open burning of explosive-contaminated waste at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in good part due to the anticipated release of dioxins and furans.

Here at home, at the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant in Kansas, contaminants of concern at the burning grounds there include explosives, perchlorate, and dioxin and furans. At Camp Navajo in Arizona, dioxin is a contaminant of concern at an open burn/open detonation area which literally covers thousands of acres. The same holds true at the Massachusetts Military Reservation, where dioxin is a contaminant of concern in areas used for demolition training and open burning/open detonation.

At Makua Military Reservation in Hawai'i, EPA Region 9 has confirmed that soil contamination and pollutants dispersed from training activities have migrated to and contaminated groundwater.

With military downsizing, large numbers of former Department of Defense properties – including the munitions plant in my own community – are being turned over to non-DoD ownership and control including to Native American tribes.

Site specific risk assessments for all these military activities – both here and abroad – require the identification and selection of appropriate contaminant toxicity values. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the military's preferred source for fundamental toxicity information is EPA's Integrated Risk Information System however, IRIS does not contain final assessments for a number of emerging contaminants that are found in hundreds of other communities just like my own including naphthalene, trichloroethylene, and dioxin.

With each day that passes, defense workers, soldiers, affected communities, tribal members, and families like my own are at increasing risk from exposure to dioxin and other toxic munitions wastes. We urge you to support the prompt release of the dioxin reassessment.

Thank you.

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On-line resources consulted in preparation for this testimony:

http://www.cswab.org/obama_dioxins.html

http://www.cswab.com/Saipan_CSAB_Comments_to_EPA_OB_OD%20permit.pdf

http://www.peer.org/docs/epa/EPA_Final_UXO_Report.pdf

http://www.sfaap.net/Attch_4_KDHE-Developer_Consent_Order.pdf

<http://groundwaterprogram.army.mil/community/facts/fact.html>

<http://ftp.rta.nato.int/public//PubFullText/RTO/TR/RTO-TR-AVT-115///TR-AVT-115-ANN-A-Files/TR-AVT-115-ANN-A-11.pdf>

<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/sps/download/state/campnavob.pdf>

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1046.pdf>

<http://www.epa.gov/region9/nepa/letters/Makua-Military-Reservation-DEIS.pdf>

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/rods/fulltext/r2008090002422.pdf>

<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/sps/download/state/campnavob.pdf>

<ftp://ftp.nmenv.state.nm.us/hwbdocs/HWB/lanl/exhibits/Exhibit%202%20-%2033110%20%20Intent%20to%20Deny%20OB%20TA%2016%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/sierra.htm>