

MICHAEL H. MICHAUD
2ND DISTRICT, MAINE

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1724 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-6306
FAX: (202) 225-2943
www.michaud.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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July 19, 2012

General Allison A. Hickey
Under Secretary for Benefits
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Under Secretary Hickey:

From 1956 to 2006 at CFB Gagetown, the Canadian government used multiple herbicides, and a period of spraying included herbicides with two known manufacturing impurities that have been shown to be human carcinogens. American Reservists, most of whom were from Maine and Massachusetts, trained at CFB Gagetown and have continued concerns that their health was impacted by exposure to both the herbicide approved for commercial use and the residual toxins left behind by Agent Orange/Purple and Agent White.

Despite approval for commercial use of some of these herbicides, there is ambiguity on whether or not the research to date has fully examined the type and level of exposure Reservists experienced. A more comprehensive understanding of the health concerns currently facing the cohort who trained at CFB Gagetown would help address the concerns of these veterans.

To that end, I am seeking more information about the VA's handling of benefit claims related to service at CFB Gagetown. Please provide the number of claims submitted to the VA for illnesses related to exposure at CFB Gagetown and the reason for the denials of these claims. In addition, please provide information on how the claimed incident rate of Agent Orange-associated diseases and illnesses for this cohort compares to a similar population that did not train at CFB Gagetown.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, and please do not hesitate to contact my office for more information.

Sincerely,



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

BANGOR:
6 STATE STREET, SUITE 101
BANGOR, ME 04401
PHONE: (207) 942-6935
FAX: (207) 942-5807

LEWISTON:
179 LISBON STREET, GROUND FLOOR
LEWISTON, ME 04240
PHONE: (207) 782-3704
FAX: (207) 782-5330



PRESQUE ISLE:
445 MAIN STREET
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769
PHONE: (207) 764-1035
FAX: (207) 764-1060

WATERVILLE:
16 COMMON STREET
WATERVILLE, ME 04901
PHONE: (207) 873-5713
FAX: (207) 873-5717