

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

July 28, 2026

The Honorable Troy Meink
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Meink,

I am writing to you today to express my continued dismay that the Department of Defense (DoD) continues to delay per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) remediation at military installations across the country. A June 11, 2026 report from NOTUS found that, for a second time and without public announcement, DoD has pushed back its timelines to investigate and clean up PFAS by as much as 20 years across 178 sites in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These include Volk and Truax Fields in Wisconsin. I request that you provide information on what this delay means for the Air Force and the Air National Guard installations in Wisconsin, and for the nearby Wisconsin communities.

These reported delays raise alarms, given that the PFAS remediation delays at DoD installations across the nation already average about a decade as of this year. The Department has confirmed 54 sites in the U.S. where PFAS poses a health risk to nearby communities; 15 of those sites face new, substantial delays, and 11 contaminated sites were due to reach cleanup milestones in 2025. None did. The timelines still do not establish a set date to finish remediation at any site. What I find even more troubling is that the changes to the timelines were made while keeping Congress in the dark. Members of Congress should be learning of such major updates that impact our communities from the Department, and not from reporters.

My primary concern is how badly these continued delays will impact Wisconsin. Some of our Air National Guard installations rank among the most PFAS-contaminated sites in the state. Truax Field in Madison, for example, has PFAS in groundwater measured as high as 39,841 parts per trillion; this is nearly 2,000 times the standard of 20 parts per trillion recommended by Wisconsin health officials. At Volk Field in Juneau County and General Mitchell Field in Milwaukee County, readings are as high as 23,000 and 10,800 parts per trillion, respectively. This is a major health concern for my constituents, and the longer this problem goes unresolved, the greater the threat of contamination grows.

The Administration is also moving to cut funding and weaken the standards behind any PFAS remediation work. For example, the EPA announced plans last year to rescind drinking-water limits for several PFAS compounds and to push compliance deadlines for PFOA and PFOS to 2031. Additionally, the Department's FY2027 budget request proposes cutting about \$44 million from environmental restoration accounts. The GAO reported last year that the Department has spent \$2.6 billion on PFAS since 2017. Yet, no site has a known timeline to finish cleanup. Future investigation and remediation efforts, by the report's estimates, will now cost more than \$9.3 billion from fiscal year 2025 and beyond, and those costs have more than tripled since 2022.

By your Department's own figures, delay saves nothing. Delay lets plumes spread, exposes more families, and raises the final bill.

I have worked for years to hold the Department accountable on PFAS through added federal funding for military PFAS cleanup and for replacing PFAS-based firefighting foam. It is unacceptable for the Department to disregard years of efforts to improve Wisconsin's drinking water and further imperil the safety of my constituents without so much as an explanation.

I request the following from you no later than August 11, 2026:

1. A full list of Wisconsin Air Force and Air National Guard installations whose PFAS investigation or cleanup milestones have changed, what the prior milestones were, new milestones dates, and the specific reasons for the change.
2. Confirmation of whether any Wisconsin installation falls among the 54 sites where the Department has confirmed a PFAS health risk to a surrounding community, and among the 15 such sites facing new delays. Include the interim steps the Air Force is taking to give affected residents safe drinking water in the meantime.
3. The current progress status and expected completion date of the remedial investigation at the Air Force and Air National Guard installations in Wisconsin and the Department's plan to fund and begin real remediation of the contamination, not more study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Baldwin" clearly distinguishable.

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator