

United States Senate

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COMMITTEES
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ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INTELLIGENCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

May 14, 2018

Mr. Cosmo Servidio
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-2029

Dear Mr. Servidio:

I write to encourage you to visit the town of Minden in Fayette County, West Virginia at your earliest convenience. As you may know, since 1984, this small community has been designated as a SuperFund site by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). This rural community was contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) by an industrial facility owned by the Shaffer Equipment Company. From 1970 to 1984, the Shaffer Equipment Company built electrical substations for the local coal mining industry. The company also stored equipment at the site including damaged or outdated transformers and capacitors. The EPA has conducted several removal actions on the property since 1984 including the removal of more than 5,000 tons of contaminated soil.

While the EPA continues to take action to assist the residents of Minden, I am gravely concerned about the reports stating that cancer rates are significantly higher in Minden than the rest of Fayette County. However, the EPA and the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health have not been able to establish that PCB exposure from the Superfund site is responsible for these high cancer rates or for a cancer cluster in this small, rural Appalachia town despite the extraordinary circumstances. I have asked Secretary Azar to direct the National Toxicology Program and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to conduct additional research into the link between exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and cancer. It is important for us to fully understand the public health implications of the link between PCBs and cancer in order to develop a plan to protect those who have been exposed to these dangerous chemicals.

I am hopeful that this research will shed more light on the full range of impacts that PCBs can have on human health. But, I also believe it is crucial that you meet with the residents of Minden. It is my understanding that former SuperFund chief, Albert "Kell"

Kelly was scheduled to visit Minden but sent a staff aide in his place. I understand that he made numerous visits to SuperFund sites around the nation during his tenure. And, while I am grateful that the EPA continues to visit with community representatives and is conducting testing to determine whether the community should be added to the National Priority List, I believe that Minden warrants the attention of senior leadership at the EPA. As the Region 3 Administrator, your presence and leadership will be a clear sign to the residents of Minden that they are not forgotten and that the EPA is doing everything within its authority and resource base to assist the community.

I would be happy to facilitate this meeting and look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my staff, Sarah Venuto (Sarah_venuto@manchin.senate.gov) and Kim Good (kim_good@manchin.senate.gov) with any questions. Thank you.

With Warm Regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Scott Pruitt
The Honorable Jim Justice
The Honorable Austin Caperton
The Honorable Rahul Gupta