

Statements & Releases - Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, New York
For Immediate Release

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CLINTON WELCOMES APPROVAL BY KEY SENATE COMMITTEE OF HER LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS TCE CONTAMINATION

Many New York Communities Face Health Risks Due to Exposure to the Dangerous Carcinogen

WASHINGTON, DC. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton today welcomed approval by a key Senate committee of her legislation to require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set tougher regulations to protect the public from exposure to the carcinogenic chemical Trichloroethylene (TCE), which is one of the most widespread industrial water contaminants in the nation and is found at many sites across New York. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee today approved Senator Clinton's TCE Reduction Act, which will now go to the Senate Floor for consideration by the full Senate.

"New York cannot wait any longer for the administration to take action on the dangerous TCE contamination across our state. A growing number of communities are facing the serious health risks caused by exposure to TCE, including cancer, damage to the nervous and immune systems, and developmental problems in children. And yet, despite these dangers, the Bush EPA delays and delays. My legislation will force the administration to finally take steps to address this pressing issue. I welcome the committee's bi-partisan approval of this important measure and urge the Senate to pass it promptly." Senator Clinton said.

Senator Clinton introduced the TCE Reduction Act in 2007 after earlier efforts to convince the EPA to address the growing TCE contamination crisis in New York. Of the 86 federal Superfund sites in New York alone, more than 30 have been found by the EPA to have TCE contamination. Endicott, Franklin Square, Garden City, Hopewell Junction, Ithaca, Norwich and Victor are a few of the communities throughout New York that are known to be contaminated with TCE. Senator Clinton's bill follows lengthy delays by EPA in setting a new standard in the face of growing scientific evidence and contamination that is more widespread.

A draft EPA Risk Assessment in 2001 found TCE to be as much as 40 times more carcinogenic than previously thought, but rather than using EPA science to set a more protective standard for TCE in drinking water, the Bush administration called for more study. The National Research Council (NRC) was directed to conduct an in depth study the health studies involving TCE. Far from repudiating EPA's 2001 findings, the final NRC report, issued in 2006, found that "the evidence on carcinogenic risk and other health hazards from exposure to trichloroethylene has strengthened since 2001." The report went on to say, "The committee recommends that federal agencies finalize their risk assessment with currently available data so that risk management decisions can be made expeditiously."

Senator Clinton has previously pressed the EPA to set a standard based on the latest science, but the EPA has failed to act or set a timeline. According to the EPA's website, EPA does not plan to release a revised standard until the end of 2010.

The TCE Reduction Act would require EPA to:

- * Issue a revised health advisory for TCE within 6 months of enactment.
- * Issue revised draft health standards for TCE in drinking water within 12 months of enactment, and final drinking water standards within 18 months.
- * Issue a health advisory standard for TCE vapor intrusion within 12 months of enactment.
- * Establish an Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) reference concentration (RfC) of TCE vapor within 18 months of enactment.

Ensure that all standards set under the bill fully protect susceptible populations (including pregnant women, infants, and children) from the adverse health effects of TCE.

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News Release

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Senate Committee Approves Dole Bill to Protect Against TCE Contamination

Washington, D.C. , The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works today approved a bill sponsored by U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole to help protect our most susceptible populations, such as pregnant women, infants and children, against the negative health impacts of drinking water contaminated with trichloroethylene (TCE), a chemical commonly used in degreasing agents, paint and spot removers and adhesives.

"TCE is the most widespread industrial water contaminant in America," said Dole. "It can be found in every state, including in the groundwater at 87 percent of our military installations. This legislation will put standards in place to help ensure that families are protected from this dangerous chemical."

The legislation, which Dole introduced with Sen. Hillary Clinton, would require the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a health advisory for TCE and a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, which is a legally enforceable public water system standard, to limit TCE levels. The bill also would require EPA to prepare an Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) inhalation reference concentration (RfC) for TCE vapor exposure. IRIS is an electronic database containing information on human health effects that may result from exposure to

various chemicals in the environment, and an RfC would provide an estimate of how much TCE vapor exposure would create an appreciable risk for harmful effects.

Dole's bill received broad, bipartisan support in the Committee vote, with only one member opposing it.

Background

Government estimates show that over three decades (1958-1987), as many as 1 million people living and working at Camp Lejeune, N.C. may have been exposed to drinking water contaminated with TCE, among other chemicals. The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has found that babies exposed in utero to the drinking water developed leukemia and other cancers, as well as birth defects, such as spina bifida and cleft palate.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Dole has fought to help bring forward the facts about the Camp Lejeune water contamination and to expedite the notification of potential victims. The defense authorization bill for fiscal year 2008 included Dole's amendment that requires the Secretary of the Navy to identify and directly notify former and retired Marines, their families and civilian employees who lived and worked at Camp Lejeune of their possible exposure to the contaminated drinking water.

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