

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2026

The Honorable Michael Borders
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
300 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Assistant Secretary Borders,

For decades, at Wurtsmith and across the country, the Air Force used firefighting foam containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Over time, these PFAS leached into the groundwater and migrated off bases into surrounding areas. Exposure to PFAS is known to lead to increased cancer risk, developmental effects, reduced ability of the body's immune system, and many other negative health effects. As required under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Air Force has taken steps towards the remediation of these harmful chemicals. At Wurtsmith, however, this process has been mired in delays and marked by recurring missteps over a period of more than 16 years, leaving the Oscoda community frustrated and in continued search of answers and timely solutions. As the Congressional representatives for this community, we are steadfast in our commitment to deliver these much-needed answers and timely data-driven solutions. That's why we greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss both the community's concerns as well as the Air Force's continued efforts at Wurtsmith. In that meeting, we covered significant ground, and we were pleased that you were willing to make a number of important commitments as it relates to the Wurtsmith cleanup. We write today to request these same commitments in writing, so that we may more easily share them with the Oscoda community and ensure that we move forward together on the very same page.

- **GSI as Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirement:**

Decades ago, the State of Michigan recognized the importance of promulgating numeric groundwater surface water interface (GSI) criteria to prevent contaminated groundwater from flowing into lakes, rivers and streams at levels that harm human health and aquatic life. The PFAS-contaminated groundwater below Wurtsmith moves and flows into nearby bodies of water such as Van Etten Lake, Van Etten Creek, Clark's Marsh and the Au Sable River, which feeds into Lake Huron. Bringing the level of PFAS contamination entering these important bodies of water below Michigan's acceptable levels helps ensure the communities and tourists that rely on and recreate on these waters can do so safely and freely. Therefore, we ask that you restate, and provide written confirmation of, the Air Force's commitment to a thorough investigation of the groundwater surface interface (GSI) around the former Wurtsmith Air Force base, including the west shore of Van Etten Lake, Van Etten Creek, Clark's Marsh and along the Au Sable River, and to recognize the State of Michigan's GSI standard of 12 parts per trillion for PFOS as an Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirement as required under CERCLA. Further, we request that your office take steps, as part of its ongoing Wurtsmith oversight, to assure that the Air Force's GSI commitment is fully, thoroughly, and timely fulfilled.

- **Revised Interim Remedial Actions / DRMO & Landfill 30/31:**

In 2025, the Air Force conducted further testing as part of the pre-design investigation (PDI) to ensure that the proposed Interim Remedial Actions (IRAs) for the DRMO and Landfill 30/31 areas, including a pump-and-treat system, would be effective and appropriate. In May, the Air Force announced that it had detected PFAS contamination in those areas at Wurtsmith at significantly lower levels than indicated by

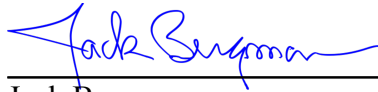
previous testing in 2016. In turn, the Air Force concluded that a full-scale pump-and-treat system for those areas would no longer be warranted. While lower PFAS levels are positive news, contamination remains above safe levels, warranting interim remedial action, though of a different sort than previously planned. We kindly ask that you restate, and provide written confirmation of, the Air Force's commitment to, within 90 days of the May 20, 2026 Wurtsmith Restoration Advisory Board Meeting, develop plans – in coordination with the Oscoda community and the Wurtsmith Technical Working Group (TWG) – for new Interim Remedial Actions to address PFAS contamination for the DRMO and Landfill 30/31 areas at Wurtsmith.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Oscoda has been living with the fallout of PFAS contamination for decades. These commitments will help demonstrate to Oscoda the seriousness with which the Air Force takes these remediation efforts and its strong desire to make the community a healthy and safe place to live.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator