



SENATOR THERESE M. TERLAJE

Committee on Health, Tourism, Historic Preservation, Land and Justice

I Mina' trentai Singko na Libeslaturan Guåhan

35th Guam Legislature

Senator Therese Terlaje: October 2019 Off-Base Testing Report Supports Probable Agent Orange Exposure on Guam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (July 6, 2020 – Hagåtña, Guam) - The Guam EPA has publicly released the results of the anticipated Guam Chlorinated Herbicides Investigation report eight months after soil sampling efforts took place in October 2019.

Initial tests were conducted by the Superfund team in November 2018. Preliminary soil sampling results of that effort were released in January 2019, indicating the presence of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, the primary constituents of Agent Orange, at non-toxic levels in one sample location.

The October 2019 testing effort was a follow-up to the 2018 testing and the result of the continued advocacy of Guam Veteran Brian Moyer, who assisted the Guam EPA and the US EPA Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) with planning and soil sampling at various locations along the old fuel pipeline.

According to START Project Scientist Amanda Wagner, in the report summary, on samples collected at the Tiyan Junction location, which yielded higher concentrations of 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP than other areas sampled, "It is probable that TCDD dioxin congener concentrations detected in soils are associated with chlorinated herbicides. Records of chlorinated herbicide use by the military on Guam (Navy, 1958) and veteran affidavits documenting the use of 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP along with data collected from previous soil sampling events suggest the presence and use of chlorinated herbicides was likely. Finally, the herbicides in question were known to contain TCDD."

TCDD (2,3,7,8-TCDD) is a carcinogen that when combined with chlorinated herbicides, such as 2,4,5-T, was known to have varying levels of contamination. Both are active components of Agent Orange and other Rainbow Herbicides.

Wagner further stated, "To clarify any remaining uncertainty about herbicide types, amounts and locations sprayed, continued investigation of suspect areas is recommended. Additional sampling at depths up to 12 inches is suggested to account for possible degradation and migration of residual herbicides and dioxin congeners. Similarities and differences between sample location characteristics (environmental conditions,

Mailing Address: Guam Congress Building, 163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Office Address: Ada Plaza Center, Suite 207, 173 Aspinall Avenue, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Tel: (671) 472-3586 | Fax: (671) 969-3590 | Email: senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com | www.senatorterlaje.com

vegetation cover, historical land use, previous excavations, use of imported fill, etc.) and the congener profiles should be further investigated as possible markers to aid in identifying historical herbicide use.”

In a letter to Senator Terlaje, the Guam EPA noted that the investigation is still ongoing and expressed the agency’s intent to correspond with the Department of Defense to express their concerns with the findings in this report and advocate for continued partnership and more cooperation with investigative efforts. The START team had been denied access to on-base sites to conduct testing in recommended areas during the October 2019 soil sampling investigation.

“This long-anticipated report brings us ten steps closer to validating that Guam Veterans and our island community were in fact exposed to Agent Orange. I once again commend the Guam EPA and the U.S. EPA START Team, for their continued service to our people in seeking the truth of this matter and wholeheartedly support the Guam EPA’s intent to advocate for cooperation and partnership with the Department of Defense for further investigations.

I continue to call upon the Department of Defense to initiate cleanup efforts and support presumptive eligibility and compensation for exposed Veterans and our Guam community.

I remain eternally grateful for the advocacy of our people, local Veterans and Vietnam era Veterans like the late Master Sgt. Leroy Foster and the late Lonnie Kilpatrick, exposed to Agent Orange while stationed on Guam and for the groundwork of great island leaders like Angel Santos, who for over twenty years, called for truth in the face of adamant denial by the Department of Defense. They fought for truth and justice until their deaths. Their unyielding spirit of determination has been key to the progress we have made so far and will continue to be, with any justice we will achieve in the future,” stated Senator Terlaje

You can view the full report at the Guam EPA’s website: <http://epa.guam.gov/herbicides-investigation>.

#####

For more information, please contact Senator Therese M. Terlaje’s office at (671) 472-3586 or via e-mail at senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com.