

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 6, 2021

Mr. Sean O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Mr. O'Donnell:

We write to request that in addition to the investigation the Hawaii Congressional Delegation requested on November 3, 2021, you conduct a more comprehensive, holistic evaluation to assess the overall safety of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (hereinafter "Red Hill"). The aforementioned request for the investigation centered on discreet allegations about whether officials involved in the operation and oversight of Red Hill engaged in a cover-up or intentionally delayed reporting of a fuel leak to secure a Hawaii Department of Health operating permit. Subsequent to that initial request, a series of incidents have called into question the Navy's ability to safely operate Red Hill and sowed community distrust.

We request that a component of this more holistic, comprehensive evaluation specifically assess the incident on November 20, 2021, where 14,000 gallons of fuel and water were released from a fire suppression drain line and that you review the Navy's recent laboratory confirmation of petroleum hydrocarbons in the Red Hill Well after recent and ongoing widespread complaints from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam military housing residents about their potable water having a chemical or fuel smell. As part of this evaluation, we request an assessment of the Navy's response plan for incidents that contaminate drinking water, including making potable water available to affected residents as well as frequency and clarity of communication with affected state agencies and the public, be included.

Additionally, as several of the recent incidents have involved leaks or releases from pipes connected to Red Hill and deemed part of the overall Red Hill system, we urge you to include in your evaluation an assessment of the safety of the piping system connected to Red Hill, as well as the effectiveness of personnel training in minimizing incidences caused by human error. Finally, the evaluation you conduct should include an independent review of the current safety of Red Hill's fuel tanks and the feasibility of the Navy's plan to either double-hull the twenty fuel tanks or close Red Hill by 2045.

We recognize the strategic importance of Red Hill to our national security. However, it is imperative that the public has confidence that Red Hill is and will be operated in a manner that safely protects the aquifer that supplies a majority of the potable water to Honolulu and the surrounding areas. For these reasons, we respectfully ask you broaden your review to also include an evaluation of the overall safety of Red Hill and the Navy's plan going forward to mitigate the risk and respond to any future fuel leak or release. Your independent results will inform Red Hill's safety and any risks that must be addressed to protect surrounding communities. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



MAZIE K. HIRONO
U.S. Senator



BRIAN SCHATZ
U.S. Senator



ED CASE
U.S. Representative



KAIALI'I KAHELE
U.S. Representative