

January 26, 2023

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C.
20350-1200

Dear Secretary Del Toro:

One year has passed since the completion of Admiral Samuel Paparo's investigation into the May 6, 2021 and November 20, 2021 fuel releases at Red Hill, which resulted in dozens of recommendations. As you know, these releases impacted more than 93,000 individuals, including nearly 10,000 families, on Oahu and forced several local businesses to temporarily shut their doors.

More than a year later, the Navy's ongoing response to these releases continues to raise serious concerns about its ability to take the proper corrective action in a transparent manner. With continuing community distrust in the Navy and impacted families still experiencing adverse medical conditions, it is critically important that the Navy has incorporated lessons learned into its standard operating procedures for facilities in Hawaii and all shore-based infrastructure across the Navy. Many of the recommendations in Admiral Paparo's investigation led to what I would characterize as straight forward recommendations, while others address more complex problems of culture and leadership that will require long term solutions. I am writing for a brief on how both types of these recommendations have been implemented, the status of any incomplete tasks, and the plan for confronting long term challenges. This should include but not be limited to the following:

Objective Recommendations:

- Has the Navy completed a comprehensive review of material, operation, and incident-response readiness at the 48 unique defense fuel storage points they manage worldwide?
- The investigation recommended clearly defining incident response capabilities that can be performed by Fleet Logistics Command Pearl Harbor personnel, and clearly defining which organization is responsible for incidents beyond Fleet Logistics Command Pearl Harbor's response capability. Which response capabilities have been identified, and which organization will be responsible for incidents beyond Fleet Logistics Command capability? What are the restrictions on Fleet Logistics Command Pearl Harbor's response capability?
- Has Fleet Logistics Command Pearl Harbor developed a process for self-assessment? If so, how does this process determine if the Command needs additional assistance?
- How has the Navy addressed risk taken at shore-based facilities in terms of manning?
- Has the Navy updated the emergency response procedures for shore-based commands?
- The Command Investigation found that Red Hill is undermanned at every level. Have additional Fuels Department personnel (such as watch standers and supervisors) been hired, and have additional personnel been assigned to supervise fuel operations?

- The investigation recommended auditing the Red Hill Aqueous Film Form Foam (AFFF) system maintenance contract and applying modifications as necessary. On November 29, 2023, during routine maintenance there was a spill of 1300 gallons of AFFF from a pipe at Red Hill. Was the system maintenance contract audited prior to the spill and if so, how did this still happen?
- Naval Facilities Command Hawaii's capacity for contracting was identified as a limiting factor for both Red Hill maintenance and Commander, Navy Region Hawaii environmental functions. What is the status of the evaluation into whether Naval Facilities Command Hawaii is appropriately resourced to award contract funds in support of Red Hill maintenance, operations, and environmental monitoring?

Long Term Recommendations:

- How has the Navy addressed their culture of procedural non-compliance, poor training and supervision, ineffective command and control, absence of ownership regarding operational safety, and their unacceptable immediate response actions?
- Has the Navy completed organizational reforms and implemented the 'No-Fail operational framework'?
- How has the Navy been stressing a sense of urgency and critical thinking? If so, how has the Navy been addressing these essential qualities in the chain of command?
- Has the Navy eliminated 'best case' thinking that assumes an outcome that serves one's purposes regardless the information or evidence to the contrary?
- How has the Navy addressed how communication flows within the shore commands in Hawaii (CNIC, NAVSUP, and NAVFAC organizations) to the community?
- The complex command and control of Red Hill has devolved to blurred lines of authority and accountability, as seen on November 20, 2021, when no single person took charge at the scene of the fuel leak. Has the Navy addressed the 'management by committee' practice at Red Hill and all shore facilities that have multiple commands involved?
- How has the Navy required regional commanders to enhance unity of command between NAVFAC and NAVSUP, including how they have clearly defined lines of responsibility, authority, and accountability?

As I have expressed my concerns related to command and control in the Navy previously, it is imperative that the Navy swiftly identify and stamp out the culture of procedural non-compliance and leadership mentality that lacks initiative and critical thinking. Please provide any additional information regarding the Navy's changes to their command and control structure that were implemented in accordance with the 2021 Red Hill investigation.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator