



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4

ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

MAR - 9 2010

RECEIVED

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The Honorable Ron Klein
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DEP SECRETARY

Dear Congressman Klein:

Thank you for your February 3, 2010, letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P. Jackson regarding an investigation into the cause of the cancer cluster in Palm Beach County. Your letter requests that EPA immediately help state and local authorities in Florida investigate the cause of the elevated cancer diagnoses. Your inquiry has been referred to my office for a response.

Coordinated sampling efforts are underway by state and local authorities and EPA has offered to assist in those efforts. Region 4's Superfund Division Director and his staff have been in close communication with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) officials since last summer when the issue was identified to both agencies. We offered our assistance to FDEP at that time and have continued to do so. FDEP is providing support to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) to determine whether there are any apparent environmental links to the Acreage cancer cluster. Last month, FDEP collected additional drinking water samples from private wells in the Acreage. Homes were sampled in pairs to include one home with reported cancer and a similarly situated nearby home with no reported case of cancer. The samples are being analyzed for over 200 individual chemicals. Results are expected to be available mid March. FDEP also plans to conduct soil sampling in the Acreage in early March, as most homes in this area are built on fill, which is reported to be recovered screened construction and debris material from landfills and hurricane debris.

FDOH and the Palm Beach County Health Department (PBCHD) recently conducted radon tests in eleven homes related to reports of pediatric brain cancer. The results were below the action level of four pica curies per liter. FDOH is also testing for gamma radiation in areas both inside and outside of these eleven homes and twelve other control homes. Results are forthcoming and will be provided to the homeowners. In addition, four concerned residents requested gamma testing and their results were not above the background level.

The Center for Disease Control's National Center for Environmental Health is working with FDOH and PBCHD on analyzing data collected in The Acreage. We have had regular discussions with our Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Senior Regional Representative about finding the cause of the cancer cluster in The Acreage and

possible opportunities for collaborative efforts. To the extent that EPA becomes involved in the investigation, we would work with ATSDR to analyze the data to determine if the levels of contaminants in the environment could pose a health threat to the community.

EPA has been involved with evaluating the area to determine if any old facilities, spills, or other releases of hazardous materials occurred in the vicinity. To date, EPA and FDEP have found no contaminated sites that could be identified as sources or causes. The purpose of FDEP's drinking water sampling event conducted last August was to investigate the possibility of industrial or agricultural hazards in the community which might affect the drinking water supply. The results show no indication of such hazards. Another FDEP sampling event confirmed that groundwater contaminated with 1,4-dioxane from the Pratt & Whitney site has not impacted the private wells. Out of the 50 private wells sampled, only two wells contained trace levels of 1,4-dioxane, well below the applicable Florida Groundwater Cleanup Target Level. The remaining 48 private wells were determined to be free of 1,4-dioxane.

We appreciate this opportunity to inform you of our involvement in the investigation of The Acreage cancer cluster and we will continue to communicate regularly with our partners at FDEP and the health agencies.

Lastly, in response to your request for a community point of contact for this matter, please contact Dawn Taylor, Chief of the Superfund Site Evaluation Section, at (404) 562-8575. In addition, you can also contact me or the Region 4 Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (404) 562-8327.

Sincerely,



A. Stanley Meiburg
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Michael McGeehin, CDC
✓ Michael Sole, Secretary FDEP
Ana M. Viamonte Ros, Surgeon General FDOH



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MAR - 9 2010

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0905

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your February 5, 2010, letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P. Jackson regarding an investigation into the cause of the cancer cluster in Palm Beach County. Your letter references the increased level of cancer of the brain and central nervous system in children and young women in the Acreage and requests that EPA help state and local officials conduct further environmental testing and study of this area. You further mention that state health officials need guidance from federal agencies. Your inquiry has been referred to my office for a response.

Coordinated sampling efforts are underway by state and local authorities and EPA has offered to assist in those efforts. Region 4's Superfund Division Director and his staff have been in close communication with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) officials since last summer when the issue was identified to both agencies. We offered our assistance to FDEP at that time and have continued to do so. FDEP is providing support to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) to determine whether there are any apparent environmental links to the Acreage cancer cluster. Last month, FDEP collected additional drinking water samples from private wells in the Acreage. Homes were sampled in pairs to include one home with reported cancer and a similarly situated nearby home with no reported case of cancer. The samples are being analyzed for over 200 individual chemicals. Results are expected to be available mid March. FDEP also plans to conduct soil sampling in the Acreage in early March, as most homes in this area are built on fill, which is reported to be recovered screened construction and debris material from landfills and hurricane debris.

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The Center for Disease Control's National Center for Environmental Health is working with FDOH and PBCHD on analyzing data collected in The Acreage. We have had regular discussions with our Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Senior Regional Representative about finding the cause of the cancer cluster in The Acreage and possible opportunities for collaborative efforts. To the extent that EPA becomes involved in the investigation, we would work with ATSDR to analyze the data to determine if the levels of contaminants in the environment could pose a health threat to the community.

EPA has been involved with evaluating the area to determine if any old facilities, spills, or other releases of hazardous materials occurred in the vicinity. To date, EPA and FDEP have not found contaminated sites that could be identified as sources or causes. The purpose of FDEP's drinking water sampling event conducted last August was to investigate the possibility of industrial or agricultural hazards in the community which might affect the drinking water supply. The results show no indication of such hazards. Another FDEP sampling event confirmed that groundwater contaminated with 1,4-dioxane from the Pratt & Whitney site has not impacted the private wells. Out of the 50 private wells sampled, only two wells contained trace levels of 1,4-dioxane, well below the applicable Florida Groundwater Cleanup Target Level. The remaining 48 private wells were determined to be free of 1,4-dioxane.

We appreciate this opportunity to keep you informed of our involvement in the investigation of The Acreage cancer cluster. As I have explained, EPA does not have an active role in the investigation at this time, but we continue to communicate regularly with our partners at FDEP and the health agencies.

If you have questions or need additional information from EPA, please contact me or the Region 4 Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (404) 562-8327.

Sincerely,



A. Stanley Meiburg
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Michael McGeehin, CDC
✓ Michael Sole, Secretary FDEP
Ana M. Viamontè Ros, Surgeon General FDOH