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Ed Potosnak, Acting Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dr. Raynard Washington, Acting Commissioner
Department of Health
P. O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625

Leah Graziano, Director
U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease
Registry, Region 2
2890 Woodbridge Ave.
Edison, NJ 08837

Mike Martucci, Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
290 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Acting Commissioner Potosnak, Acting Commissioner Washington, Regional Director
Graziano, and Region 2 Administrator Martucci:

I am writing to urgently request that your agencies take immediate action to address the
community concerns of a suspected cancer cluster in Keyport, NJ. As you know, advocates have
identified over 40 cases, 28 of which are concentrated on and around First Street, particularly in
neighborhoods surrounding the former Aeromarine landfill site along the Raritan Bay shoreline.

Recent community concerns regarding elevated cancer incidence are especially alarming in light
of the extensive and well-documented history of contamination associated with the Aeromarine
site. In 1979, New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) ordered the
shutdown of the Aeromarine landfill, citing "numerous operating and engineering deficiencies
and overall exhaustion of capacity." Despite this action, the property owners have not taken
substantive redevelopment or comprehensive remediation to date.

Subsequent investigations have identified significant and ongoing environmental hazards at the
site. In 2010, a proposed redevelopment initiative prompted an environmental assessment that
documented serious deficiencies in the landfill's condition. According to findings later
referenced in a 2021 lawsuit filed by the Borough of Keyport, substantial portions of the landfill,
particularly those adjacent to Raritan Bay, lack adequate engineering controls, allowing solid
waste to migrate beyond the site boundary and into surrounding shoreline and bay areas.

The environmental assessment and subsequent legal filings further documented the presence and
migration of hazardous substances, including heavy metals, methane gas, carcinogenic
compounds such as benzene, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into soil and groundwater.
Contaminants were also reported to have migrated into Chingarora Creek, which borders the
landfill property, raising significant concerns regarding broader ecological contamination and

groundwater appears to be discharging hazardous substances from the base of the landfill. The site has not been properly capped, which is a fundamental environmental control necessary to prevent the continued spread of contaminants through air, soil, and water pathways.

While it has been reported that local drinking water sources have not been definitively impacted, experts have noted in press reports that residents may nonetheless face potential exposure through other means, including direct contact with contaminated soil, recreational use of adjacent waterways, inhalation of airborne contaminants, and stormwater runoff events that may transport pollutants into surrounding residential areas.

Despite decades of documented concerns, meaningful remediation has not been completed. State inspections dating back to 1986 repeatedly identified environmental violations, often with extended intervals between inspections during which conditions further deteriorated. Enforcement actions have been limited. The first monetary penalty issued by DEP occurred in 2021 in the amount of \$15,000.

After reports of suspected lead were found on the beach in the vicinity of the former Aeromarine landfill in 2024, I coordinated a response from the DEP and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate, test the material, and cleanup the hazardous material from the beach. DEP then issued additional penalties of approximately \$300,000 in 2024, which subsequently increased to nearly \$900,000 in 2025. However, these penalties remain unpaid, and the landfill has not been properly closed or remediated by the owner. In fact, it appears that even though the site was never properly capped, residents or visitors can just walk onto the property through an open gate or along the shoreline.

Given this extensive history of documented contamination, regulatory enforcement challenges, and ongoing environmental risk, it is imperative that the relevant federal and state agencies determine whether any association exists between conditions at the Aeromarine landfill and reported cancer cases within the surrounding community.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that your agencies work in close coordination to implement the following:

- Promptly secure the site to restrict unauthorized access and minimize potential health and environmental risks.
- Conduct a comprehensive environmental investigation of the Aeromarine landfill and surrounding residential areas, including soil, groundwater, sediment, and air quality testing.
- Fully assess the extent of contaminant migration, including potential impacts to Chingarora Creek, Raritan Bay, and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Evaluate cancer incidence data and determine whether a statistically significant cancer cluster exists.
- Develop and publicly disclose a plan for immediate mitigation of identified hazards, including methane gas accumulation and ongoing contaminant leaching.
- Enforce existing penalties and pursue all available regulatory and legal remedies to ensure full remediation of the site.

- Provide transparent and ongoing communication to affected residents regarding findings, risks, and recommended protective measures.

A suspected cancer cluster in our community is a sensitive matter that requires the full force of our public health and environmental protection agencies. I sincerely urge you and your agencies to collaborate, take meaningful action and inform the community of your work. The residents of Keyport are entitled to clarity, accountability, and protection from potential environmental harm.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress