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Sierra Club

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, STATE OF	)	Docket No. 21-UST-EA-02
HAWAII	)	
	)	DECLARATION OF KEVIN T.
Complainant,	)	AUBART
	)	
vs.	)	
	)	
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE	)	
NAVY,	)	
	)	
Respondent.	)	

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DECLARATION OF KEVIN T. AUBART

I, Kevin T. Aubart, declare that if called as a witness in this action I would testify of my own personal knowledge as follows:

1. I am a civilian employee working for the United States Department of the Army. Since late 2016, I have been a resident of Doris Miller Park, a Navy housing community located near Honolulu International Airport. I am a member of the Sierra Club.

2. On or about November 28, 2021, my wife came out of the kitchen of our home at Doris Miller Park to tell me that the water coming out of the tap smelled terrible. At first, I told her it was probably chlorine. But when I went into the kitchen, put some water from the faucet into a cup, and smelled it, I immediately recognized the smell as jet fuel.

3. I am very familiar with the smell of jet fuel because, from 1991 to 1995, I was enlisted in the United States Air Force and worked as a security police officer at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. I often did security patrols on the flight line, where I would smell jet fuel. In addition, there was an airplane crash during my deployment to South Korea where a lot of jet fuel was spilled. Accordingly, I know jet fuel when I smell it.

4. After smelling jet fuel in the water coming out of our kitchen faucet, I told my wife to stop using the water for cooking. I did not, however, think about the fact that she had already used that water to cook rice, which we subsequently ate. I also did not think about the fact that we had washed our dishes, silverware, and pots with that water, and we continued to eat food from those dishes, silverware, and pots.

5. After smelling the jet fuel in our kitchen water, my wife and I did our best to avoid using our water but found that very difficult to do. We continued to use water to brush our teeth and to shower. We had no other choice. Showering with the water caused red rashes on our skin and irritated our eyes.

6. In the days immediately after smelling jet fuel in our home's water, both my wife and I experienced stomach aches, diarrhea, skin rashes, sore throats, and mild headaches.

7. As soon as I smelled the jet fuel in our water, I went online to see if I could get any information about what was going on. I looked on Facebook and noticed that many people in

military housing on O‘ahu were likewise complaining about the smell in their water, as well as ailments similar to the ones my wife and I were experiencing.

8. To avoid further harm from the contaminated water coming out of the tap at our home, my wife and I have been using bottled water—which is supplied by the Army—to wash our hands and brush our teeth. We have been taking showers at a room in an airport hotel, for which the Army is also paying because the water in our house is not safe for that purpose.

9. Now that my wife and I are no longer using the water from our home, our ailments have largely gone away. But we are extremely inconvenienced by not being able to drink from our tap or use tap water to cook, brush our teeth, wash our hands, or shower. Moreover, we are also deeply concerned that, if the Navy is allowed to continue to store fuel in the aged, corroding, leaking tanks at the Red Hill facility, our water will be poisoned in the future. We suffer anxiety about whether we can ever trust our water to be safe.

10. A couple of years ago, many families in Navy military housing, including my wife and me, experienced stomach aches, sore throats, skin irritations, and headaches that were similar to those my wife and I experienced after this latest leak from the Red Hill facility. At the time, we suspected black mold based on the symptoms. Navy housing sent out trained personnel to inspect our housing units, but, to my knowledge, they were unable to locate any mold. I now believe that our ailments were likely due to earlier leaks from the Red Hill facility.

11. In my view, the only way to protect me, my wife, and other O‘ahu residents who rely on the aquifer underlying the Red Hill facility for drinking water is to require the Navy to remove all of the fuel that is currently stored in the nearly 80-year old, corroded, leaky Red Hill tanks and move that fuel to a safe, modern, above-ground storage location. I strongly support the Sierra Club’s efforts to shut down the Red Hill tanks.

12. The U.S. Navy poisoned thousands of military families with jet fuel, denied it, lied about it, and refused to accept responsibility for it. I am deeply concerned that, if the Navy is not forced to shut down the old, corroded and leaking Red Hill fuel tanks, fuel will leak into our drinking water again and may be more severe and widespread next time. If the Red Hill fuel tanks are not shut down, my wife and I will live in constant fear of our water getting contaminated again, with no way to know it until we can actually smell jet fuel.

13. Being prior military, I understand the importance of stored jet fuel to our national security. But the Navy has known about these Red Hill fuel leaks for decades, and the Navy failed to take the necessary steps to avoid poisoning its own people. It is long past time for the Navy to drain the old tanks and clean up the contamination it has already caused.

I declare under penalty of law that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

DATED: Honolulu, Hawai'i, December 16, 2021.

  
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Kevin T. Aubart