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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII

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

DECLARATION OF KIMBERLY CHARTERS

I, Kimberly Charters, declare that if called as a witness in this action I would testify of my own personal knowledge as follows:

1. I am twenty-six years old and live with my husband, Alexander Kudrow, who is an active-duty service member at Aliamanu Military Reserve (AMR).

2. During the week of Thanksgiving, my 11-month-old golden retriever started throwing up on a daily basis. I also noticed that he was lethargic and drinking less water than is normal; he would only drink after throwing up and then he would throw up the water.

3. On Thanksgiving night, which was November 25, 2021, I experienced a burning sensation in my stomach, and observed a visible bloating of my abdomen. I thought that I may have eaten too much dairy or other rich foods during the holiday meal even though I knew the bloating in my stomach was different from anything I had experienced in the past.

4. Because I continued to feel sick to my stomach the remainder of the week after Thanksgiving, I made my husband and myself a homemade soup for dinner on Sunday, November 28, 2021. Shortly after eating the soup, which I made using water from the tap water in our kitchen, I started to feel even more nauseous.

5. That night, before I went to sleep, I saw a lot of people in our Facebook groups posting about a major leak at the Red Hill fuel storage facility and how their water smelled. My husband and I smelled our tap water after reading these posts but couldn't detect any unusual smells. Because of that, at this point, I still had no reason to think the stomach problems and headaches that my husband and I were experiencing were connected to our drinking water.

6. On Monday, November 29, 2021, I woke up and went to make coffee. As soon as I turned on the faucet to fill up the coffee pot, a strong smell like kerosene filled the kitchen. I immediately went to Costco to buy bottled water because the smell coming out of the tap scared me.

7. When I arrived home from Costco, I checked the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) Facebook page to see if I could get further information about the status of our water. There was a post that the Navy was investigating resident reports concerning a smell but stated

there was no indication that the water was unsafe. A post that went up on the JBPHH Facebook page later in the day affirmatively represented that the Navy and the Department of Health had tested the water and there was no measurable quantities of fuel found in the water.

8. Despite the information we were receiving from authorities online, we stopped drinking the tap water on Monday. About 24-hours after I stopped to drinking the tap water in our home, my stomach started to feel better. I also noticed my dog stopped throwing up several days after I started giving him bottled water to drink.

9. On Tuesday, November 30, 2021, I saw that the JBPHH Facebook page had posted an online notification advising military housing residents to let the water from our taps run for three to five minutes to flush out any contaminants in the water system. I followed those directions, and the smell from flushing out the taps was so overwhelming that I became lightheaded despite the fact all of the windows in the house were open, and I had to step outside while the water finished running. After that, I developed a severe migraine that lasted for four or five days, and Tylenol did not lessen or reduce the pain in any way.

10. On December 1, 2021, I attended a town hall hosted by the Army and the Navy and learned that other residents had also had negative reactions to the smell coming out of their taps during the flushing process. Many people expressed anger about the lack of information available from authorities about the safety of our water and expressed their fears and concerns about the illnesses they and their children were experiencing. Some people at the meeting even shared that they had pets who were dying.

11. I have reviewed the video labeled as “Exhibit S-36.” It accurately reflects testimony from residents that I saw and heard at the December 1, 2021 town hall meeting.

12. An Army representative attended the town hall that night and took detailed notes while residents were speaking. By the next day, the Army had set up a relief tent at the community center to provide emergency services to affected residents including field showers, bottled water pick-up, and medical screenings. In contrast, the Navy did not provide any immediate information or services.

13. On December 2, 2021, I attended another meeting hosted by the Army where I received information about the options available to active-duty personnel during the water crisis, including the option to evacuate AMR and stay at a hotel. My husband and I decided to move into the hotel so we could have the ease of using freshwater. Even with water delivery by the Army, it was difficult to do daily tasks like wash my face using bottled water.

14. There was a rush to obtain a hotel room following the meeting, with people standing in line for over five hours to make sure they had priority options. My husband and I went to the emergency relief tent around 9:00 p.m. that night in an attempt to avoid the crowds, but, even at that time of night, we had to wait around two hours in order to process all of the paperwork.

15. On December 3, 2021, my husband and I secured a hotel room in Waikiki where we got to shower and sleep after work. However, we continue to commute home every day for my husband to work at Hickam and for me to work out of my home art studio.

16. On December 4, 2021, me, my husband, and our two dogs all received medical screenings at the Army's emergency relief center. The examining doctor confirmed that the headaches and stomachaches I was experiencing were consistent with the short-term effects of ingesting petroleum. I was told that if my symptoms lasted longer than a few days that I should seek further medical assistance.

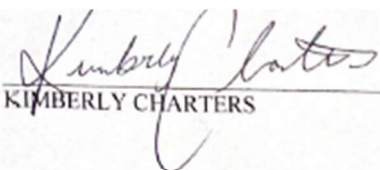
17. On December 5, 2021, I attended another town hall, this time at Hickam Air Force Base and heard testimony from many concerned residents of military housing. I have reviewed the video labeled as “Exhibit S-39.” It accurately reflects the testimony that I saw and heard one woman offer at the December 5, 2021 town hall meeting

18. The Army’s contract with the hotel expired on December 16, 2021, but my husband and I are eligible to stay in a hotel and seek reimbursement afterwards. While this is inconvenient, it is better than staying in our home without clean water to bathe. Currently, we don’t know how long it will take for the Navy to repair the water system so that we can move back into our home.

19. I support the Sierra Club’s goal to obtain a permanent fix for the Red Hill fuel tanks including moving the petroleum to another location where it cannot contaminate our drinking water in the future.

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

DATED: Honolulu, Hawai‘i, December 17, 2021.



KIMBERLY CHARTERS