October 28, 2026

[redacted]
United States Air Force
1500 West Perimeter Road
Joint Base Andrews, MD 20762

Dear [redacted]:

I am writing to express my serious concerns about the pace of investigation and cleanup following the major jet fuel releases at Joint Base Andrews in December 2025 and March 2026, and the ongoing discharges into Maryland waters.

These incidents have raised concerns about the condition of the base's fueling infrastructure, the potential impacts to Maryland's waterways, and the timeliness of the response. After seven months of coordination between our teams, I am troubled that fundamental questions about the source of the releases and the actions necessary to prevent further contamination remain unanswered. Also, the presence of an unknown amount of fuel under the ground continues to leak into Piscataway Creek.

I recognize the complexity of investigating underground fuel systems, and I appreciate the technical work that has taken place. My team has worked closely with yours, including reviewing the hydrant loop testing methodology submitted on August 31, the draft conceptual site model (CSM) submitted on September 29, the revised leak detection testing work plan submitted on October 22, and the updated draft CSM received on October 23.

While these submissions represent progress, **the pace of that progress has not matched the urgency of the situation.**

We still need to establish the source of the fuel releases, determine the point of failure in [redacted], verify the location and conditions under which the [redacted] was closed, and establish a clear schedule for repairing or properly abandoning compromised piping. These are fundamental questions that should be driving the investigation and cleanup.

I am equally concerned about what our review has revealed regarding the management of the fueling system itself. My staff has identified missed corrosion protection testing requirements and inventory records showing fuel losses that require investigation under Maryland regulations. Yet the records provided do not demonstrate that the necessary investigations occurred, nor has MDE received the corresponding required notifications.

These issues raise broader concerns about the integrity of the fueling infrastructure and the adequacy of the systems intended to detect and prevent future releases.

[redacted], my concern is not simply whether the base is meeting regulatory requirements. It is whether we are doing everything necessary to protect Maryland's waterways and the communities that depend on them. The presence of petroleum contamination in Piscataway Creek makes this responsibility especially important.

I believe we share an obligation to ensure that these releases are thoroughly investigated, that contamination is addressed, and that appropriate steps are taken to prevent similar incidents in the future.

At this point, however, I need to see measurable progress, clear accountability, and a firm schedule for completing the outstanding work.

Accordingly, I am requesting your personal commitment to the following actions and deadlines:

Within 15 days, no later than November 12, 2026:

Complete the approved pressure testing of the [redacted], with MDE personnel and appropriate emergency response equipment present.

Within 30 days, no later than November 27, 2026:

1. Complete the supplemental subsurface investigation (SSI).
    a. If the SSI of [redacted] identifies no fuel contamination, submit an alternative investigation plan to determine the source of petroleum contamination in Piscataway Creek within seven days of completing the SSI.
2. Correct inaccuracies in fuel inventory records, including book inventory, daily and cumulative gain/loss calculations, and documentation of monthly leak checks. Submit all reportable inventory losses to MDE.
3. Complete outstanding corrosion protection testing for all sections of the [redacted]
4. Provide a revised investigation and remediation schedule with specific milestones and completion dates, including options for repairing or properly abandoning [redacted] and investigating other potential sources of petroleum contamination.

Within 60 days, no later than December 27, 2026:

1. Complete outstanding corrosion protection repairs for all sections of the [redacted].
2. Submit an updated conceptual site model incorporating all available monitoring and investigation data, documenting the location and closure conditions of the [redacted], and evaluating the storm drain system as a potential pathway for petroleum migration.

These deadlines are important, and I expect them to be taken seriously.

I want to emphasize that my goal is not to create an adversarial relationship between the State of Maryland and Joint Base Andrews. I value the mission of the installation and believe that our agencies can work constructively together. My team has demonstrated that commitment throughout

this investigation, and we remain ready to provide the technical coordination necessary to move this work forward.

But cooperation must be accompanied by action, and continued delays are not acceptable.

If these deadlines are not met, I will consult with our Office of the Attorney General to determine appropriate next steps to ensure compliance with applicable environmental requirements.

I ask that you personally ensure these commitments are communicated to the appropriate leadership and technical teams at Joint Base Andrews, and that you provide written confirmation of the base's plan to meet the deadlines outlined above.

[redacted], I believe we can resolve these issues through a shared commitment to accountability, transparency, and timely action. The people of Maryland deserve that commitment, and I expect nothing less.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Serena McIlwain
Secretary
Maryland Department of the Environment