



ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

JUL 3 2003

Ms. Celeste Cantu
Executive Officer, State Water Resources Control Board
California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Cantu,

Thank you for your letter of June 6, 2003. I look forward to working with you on developing an informed, balanced, risk management response to perchlorate in conjunction with the affected industries and communities.

The Department of Defense has already collected some information on the presence of perchlorate at California sites. We have enclosed a copy of the most current information we have and will direct the Military Services to provide you with any information they already have.

While EPA works towards definitively addressing the health questions and issuing an official MCL, the Department is investing in activities that will enable us to step out quickly once EPA establishes the MCL:

- I issued a policy in November 2002, allowing the Military Services to sample for perchlorate if there is a reasonable basis to suspect perchlorate is present and an exposure pathway exists. The Department of Defense is in the process of developing a more comprehensive sampling policy for perchlorate which will be out later this summer.
- The Department of Defense, over the last several years, has spent over \$25 million on research directed at perchlorate issues. This includes approximately \$4.5 million on technology for treatment and cleanup of perchlorate. We are currently co-sponsoring a pilot on in-situ biological treatment in California. We are preparing to publish a book that compares the current perchlorate cleanup technologies for efficiency and effectiveness. We are posturing ourselves to be able to respond immediately when California, other states, and the EPA set cleanup and drinking water standards.
- Our Environmental Quality Data Working Group is working with EPA staff to develop a reliable, consistent methodology for testing for the presence of perchlorate in various media.



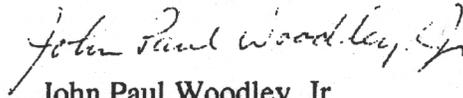
- The Army is taking steps to replace perchlorate in two key munitions that account for over 70% of usage in the Army.

In addition, the Department of Defense is complying with EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. Along with many other drinking water systems across the United States, our systems that meet the EPA size requirements are conducting sampling for perchlorate over a consecutive 12 month period from 2001 to 2003 and reporting those results to EPA's Safe Drinking Water Accession and Review System (SDWARS/UCMR). The information in SDWARS/UCMR is already available to state officials.

Dealing with emerging chemicals of concern is a challenge to all of us. We need to work cooperatively to ensure that addresses these challenges in a thoughtful, deliberative manner. I look forward to working with you to develop an approach based on sound science that is fully protective of human health and the environment.

We are evaluating the specific requests in your letter of June 6, 2003. To establish a collaborative approach to these issues, I recommend we immediately form an interagency working group to advise us jointly on options for addressing perchlorate and other emerging contaminants. I have provided a similar letter to Mr. Hickox, and Mr. Lowry.

Sincerely,



John Paul Woodley, Jr.
Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Environment)

Enclosure