



Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry
Atlanta GA 30333

SEP 24 2008

Senator Luis P. Crisostimo
P.O. Box 500129
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Senator Crisostimo:

Thank you for your February 19, 2008, letter to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) regarding your concerns for potential exposure to chemicals released on the island of Farallon de Mendinilla in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ATSDR worked closely with the U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to gather the available information related to your concerns. It is unfortunate, but ATSDR was not able to identify any fish sampling data that describes the concentration of military range-related contaminants in fish from open waters near the island of Farallon de Mendinilla. Additionally, ATSDR was not able to identify any planned future activities that would be expected to provide the necessary fish sampling data. As a result, ATSDR is not able to conduct any public health assessment activities to address your concern.

As mentioned in our previous letter dated March 24, 2008, ATSDR is authorized to conduct certain public health assessment activities following a request from a community member. ATSDR conducts these public health assessment activities to determine whether people have been, or are currently being exposed to hazardous substances released into the environment by the facility in question. The evaluation is based on the available environmental monitoring data typically gathered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the state environmental regulatory agency, or in the case of U.S. military facilities, the U.S. Department of Defense.

While we were not able to identify a source of fish sampling data for pelagic fish in the open waters near the island of Farallon de Mendinilla, we were able to identify a number of studies conducted by other researchers investigating the impact of their environmental exposure to explosive compounds. The attached consultation *Preliminary Assessment of Pelagic Fish Caught in the Open Pacific* is based both on the current scientific literature and our previous experience with analyzing the results of fish sampling data for other sites similar to the island of Farallon de Mendinilla. The consultation concludes that pelagic fish caught in open water are not likely to contain high levels of explosive residues from the neighboring Farallon de Mendinilla bombing range and will not pose a public hazard to people who eat them.

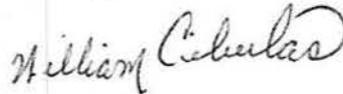
It is important to note that this conclusion applies only to contaminants released at the bombing range. We did not attempt to gather or evaluate information on other contaminants that may accumulate in fish. Additionally we can not comment on whether

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the contaminant concentration in fish that remain near the bombing range would be similar to fish captured in open water. The Navy indicates that commercial fishing near the island of Farallon de Mendinilla is prohibited for safety and security reasons. As a result, the conclusions of the attached consultation are expected to be relevant for fish captured both by commercial fishing operations and local residents following the Navy's guidelines.

Thank you for forwarding your concerns to ATSDR. I hope that you find the information in this letter helpful. If you have additional questions, please contact CAPT Susan Neurath, ATSDR Petition Coordinator, at (770) 488-3368 or email SNeurath@cdc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Cibulas Jr.".

William Cibulas Jr., Ph.D.
CAPT, U.S. Public Health Service
Director
Division of Health Assessment and Consultation