UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
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MAR 20 2015

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

Administrator Gina McCarthy has asked me to reply to your letter of February 28, 2015 regarding the inactive Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant and Northrop Grumman hazardous waste site in Bethpage, New York. As you know, the Northrop Grumman Company (NG) and the U.S. Navy are responsible for carrying out the cleanup of the site, including the extensive groundwater contamination resulting from past operations at the facility.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has the lead regulatory role with respect to this site. In our oversight role under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working closely with NYSDEC on this matter.

Both NG and the Navy have undertaken response actions to address the contamination, though much remains to be done. To date, the efforts of NG have been directed primarily to contamination at the former facility, while the efforts of the Navy have been focused primarily on investigation and remediation of the groundwater contamination beyond the facility boundary. In November, 2014, with EPA's agreement, the NYSDEC requested that NG enter into a written administrative consent order with the state agency to ensure, among other things, that the actions addressing the contamination beyond the facility boundaries continue to be performed.

It is our understanding that an agreement in principle was recently reached between NG and NYSDEC. The parties expect that a final agreement will be executed before the end of April, 2015.

We agree that this is a matter of great importance, and that progress in addressing the full scope of contamination has been slow. Long Island residents rely primarily on groundwater as their source of drinking water. It is essential that this toxic plume be addressed in a timely and effective fashion to ensure that the people of Long Island can continue to have clean drinking water. We are pleased that the parties have reached this agreement in principle. We will continue to provide technical advice and assistance; and we will closely monitor the parties' progress towards finalizing the agreement and accelerating the cleanup itself.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Enck

Judith A. Enck
Regional Administrator

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