

The Major Themes of Our New Project “The Pentagon: Exposing the Hidden Polluter of Water”

• Water Pollution by “Forever Chemicals”

This tour highlights a large class of about 5,000 chemicals, collectively called PFAS. **PFAS are known as “forever chemicals,” because they do not break down in the environment.** They are found in 99% of people’s blood, and the Environmental Working Groups reports that at least 110 million people are exposed to contaminated drinking water.

Our country is facing a nationwide drinking water crisis of epic proportions, due to this contamination from PFAS used in commercial products to make them grease, water and heat resistant. For many decades it has been used in specially formulated fire-fighting foam for intensely hot jet-fuel fires on military bases in the U.S. and abroad and at commercial airports. This foam used over and over in training exercise and also in actual fires has contaminated the drinking water of residents on bases and in surrounding communities who have suffered dire chronic or life-threatening illnesses, including prenatal and early childhood development problems, cancers, and immune system disorders. Many low-income communities of color have grown up around bases, highlighting **environmental racism and water and health justice.**

• The Role of the Pentagon, Militarism and Endless War

We focus on the Pentagon and the military’s reckless use of PFAS to demonstrate how right here at home the never-ending **preparation for war has direct consequences for those living on-base and in surrounding communities.** It is unacceptable that the currently proposed \$750 billion military budget diverts funds needed for the common good: cleanup of toxic sites, state-of-the art drinking water and water treatment systems, and healthcare.

The PFAS fire-fighting foam is only one of *many* polluting chemicals used by the military. Storms and rising sea levels wash all these chemicals into water sources and the ocean. The Department of Defense, like the tobacco and drug corporations, knew at the outset these chemicals were toxic and carcinogenic and kept silent. Please read: “California Takes on PFAS Contamination While the Military is a Primary Source of Pollution” (link <https://worldbeyondwar.org/california-takes-on-pfas-contamination-while-the-military-is-a-primary-source-of-the-pollution/>) and “A New Drinking Water Crisis Hits US Military Bases Across the Nation.” (link <https://worldbeyondwar.org/a-new-drinking-water-crisis-hit-military-bases-across-the-nation/>)

• The Public and State Officials Want Action

The public is finally alarmed, and officials in many states are taking action. **Still the Environmental Protection Agency continues to stall on setting a legally binding Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL).** For this reason, the Department of Defense refuses to regulate and has rejected claims by those living on bases for their illnesses caused by unknowingly drinking contaminated water. The EPA has proposed 70 parts per trillion. Yet, a Harvard scientist states that 1 part per trillion is too high! Many states are beginning to propose and implement a MCL level below 20 ppt.

