

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 11, 2009

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Buck McKeon
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2340 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton and Ranking Member McKeon:

As conference discussions begin on HR 2647, the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we respectfully ask that you retain Section 317 of the House-passed language that would require the Defense Secretary to prohibit the disposal of medical and hazardous waste in open-air burn pits for longer than 12 months during a contingency operation. It also would require the Secretary to submit a report on the use of such burn pits and alternatives.

As reported by CNN, Fox News and Military Times, hundreds of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and service members are becoming sick and even dying from what appears to be overexposure to dangerous toxins produced by open-air burn pits used to destroy large quantities of waste.

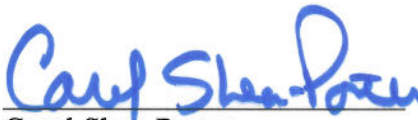
As an amendment before passage, Section 317 was strongly endorsed by the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, National Guard Association of the United States, Veterans and Military Families for Progress, Veterans of Foreign Wars. Several of these organizations expressed concern when they learned that the provision might not be retained and have alerted their members across the country. Section 317 is supported by the 33 member organizations of the Military Coalition (letter of August 26, 2009).

We urge you to support this provision, which will begin protecting our service members from these dangers.

Sincerely,



Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Bob Filner

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Janice Schakowsky

Janice Schakowsky
Member of Congress

James Oberstar

James Oberstar
Member of Congress

Rush Holt

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

David Wu

David Wu
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Ron Paul

Ron Paul
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Allyson Schwartz

Allyson Schwartz
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Russ Carnahan

Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

Dennis J. Kucinich

Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff

Adam Schiff
Member of Congress

Diane E. Watson

Diane Watson
Member of Congress

Steve Rothman

Steve Rothman
Member of Congress

Bart Gordon

Bart Gordon
Member of Congress

James McGovern

James McGovern
Member of Congress

John Hall

John Hall
Member of Congress

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

Ben Lujan
Member of Congress

Heath Shuler
Member of Congress

Bart Stupak
Member of Congress

Steve Kagan
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress

Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress

Eric Massa
Member of Congress

Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress