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July 30, 2009

The Honorable John W. Olver  
United States House of Representatives  
1111 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-2101

Dear Representative Olver:

I am writing about **H.R.2254** The Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009 and am asking for you to co-sponsor the Bill along with the other Congressman from Massachusetts.

In 1991, Congress passed the Agent Orange Act. It was to provide benefits and compensation for anyone who received the Vietnam Service Medal, or the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Service in Vietnam, who also had a specific disease listed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be a result of exposure to the dioxin in herbicides that were sprayed in Vietnam.

The Institute of Medicine recently issued its Veterans and Agent Orange Update 2008 and it contains some VERY good news.

The report introduces the Australian Study into the mainstream US Government scientific community and also the report done by Commander John Wells, USN [Ret] during the Haas case. By doing so, the IOM clearly states that a presumption of exposure to Agent Orange should be applied to Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans.

Here, finally, is the science the Department of Veterans Affairs has been claiming is not science. Indeed, it is the first bit of science of any kind about the Blue Water navy that the DVA will now have at its disposal. And it goes 100% against everything the DVA has been saying about Blue Water Navy Veterans.

The committee notes that all previous VAO committees evaluating the epidemiologic evidence concerning exposure to the herbicides sprayed in Vietnam and the full spectrum of health outcomes have always considered information from naval Vietnam veterans to pertain to possible Agent Orange exposure. This committee considers that exposure assignment to be appropriate. No new studies considered in this update contained Navy-specific information, but such information has been factored into the evolving conclusions of VAO committees.

Given the available evidence, the committee recommends that members of the Blue Water Navy should NOT be excluded from the set of Vietnam-era veterans with presumed herbicide exposure.

At this time four Massachusetts Representatives (Rep. Barney Frank, Rep. Bill Delahunt, Rep. James McGovern, Rep. Michael Capuano) have co-sponsored H.R.2254 knowing the importance of such legislation and how it will improve the quality of life for many veterans who now suffer from the effects of exposure to Agent Orange while serving this great country.

I ask now, that you too come forward and co-sponsor H.R.2254 along with your Honorable Colleagues in The United States House of Representatives for Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Laliberte  
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