

Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: State House, Room 437

The meeting will be streamed live at the following link: <https://legislature.maine.gov/Audio/#437>

AGENDA

- I. [12:00 p.m.] Welcome and introductions
- II. Overview of any new materials or information
- III. Discussion of findings and possible recommendations including final recommendations
- IV. Next steps, establish final meeting date

Additional information and materials are available on the Commission's webpage at:

<https://legislature.maine.gov/gagetown-harmful-chemical-study-commission>

Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission
Potential Recommendations (through November 30th, 2023 meeting)

Rec. #	Potential Recommendation	Rec. by:	Clarifying Questions	Notes/Additional Details	Vote
1	Request that the federal government provide access to medical care or medical help for members of the national guard who served at CFB Gagetown without additional onerous steps or processes.	Mr. Donovan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the request be for Maine national guard members, or should it be for any national guard members who trained at CFB Gagetown? • Would the medical care/help need to be related to a specific set of conditions/illnesses, such as those currently associated with Agent Orange exposure? • Would the national guard member's service be from a specific period of time? 		
2	Request that the federal government grant veteran status to the members of the national guard who served at CFB Gagetown.	Mr. Donovan/Mr. Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would this designation be for a member who served in the guard during a specific time frame and/or for a member who trained at CFB Gagetown during a specific time period? 		
3	Request that the federal government and/or the State of Maine provide recognition to widows and families of national guard members who served at CFB Gagetown and who died from a condition connected to exposure to harmful chemicals sprayed at CFB Gagetown.	Mr. Donovan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What form would recognition take? A formal apology? Monetary compensation? Educational benefits? • Would this recognition come from the federal government, and if so, from whom, or from the State of Maine, or both? 		
4	Validate the connection between the illnesses and conditions that members of the national guard who have	Mr. Gehring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would this validation be conducted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of the reports created as a part of the Canadian 		

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	served at CFB Gagetown have contracted with their service at CFB Gagetown and the chemical herbicides sprayed at the base.		<p>“Fact-finder Project” and, if so, which reports?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New studies of the environmental impact and impact on human health from these chemicals? ○ New studies of the health of individuals who served at CFB Gagetown during a specific time period and the connection to exposure to the chemicals known to have been sprayed on the base? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who would conduct this work? ● What would the timeframe for the work be? ● Who would receive this work? 		
5	Conduct a new environmental study of CFB Gagetown and the surrounding communities, including new soil, water, and animal specimen collection.	President Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See questions above related to similar recommendation. 		
6	Review and provide updated analysis on the underlying data and analyses in the original Canadian “Fact-finder Project” reports.	Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who would review these reports? It may vary depending on which report is being evaluated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DVEM/Veterans’ Bureau ○ DHHS/MECDC ○ UMaine/Muskie/UMS ○ Private entities through contract/RFP ● Which reports would be reviewed and have an updated analysis? ● Who would receive this work and what should they do with it? 		

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7	Establish a registry of individuals who served in the national guard and who trained at CFB Gagetown. The registry could include data such as names, DOB, dates of service, dates of training at CFB Gagetown, medical conditions, other information as determined to being relevant.	Rep. Russell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would establish and maintain the registry? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DVEM/Veterans' Bureau? • What is the purpose of the registry? Or, what would the data be used for? • How would individuals be identified for the registry? Would it include both individuals living and those deceased? 		
8	Establish a special projects/navigator position within the ME Bureau of Veterans' Services. This position could be responsible for establishing/maintaining the registry, conducting research of individuals' records in order to gather necessary documentation to support claims for benefits, reach out to/work with other states' national guard units to identify individuals who served at CFB Gagetown outside of the State, etc.	Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would this be a time-limited position? • Would they be responsible for additional tasks other than those outlined in the recommendation? • Would they report to anyone on the status of their work? If so, how often? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislature (VLA committee)? ○ Reestablished Commission? 		
9	Reestablish the Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission	Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be the specific tasks for the reestablished Commission? • When should the Commission be reestablished? 		

Additional/New Recommendations:

Proposed Recommendations for Gagetown Chemical Study Commission

Background – 3 Major Conclusions

1. Expert witness testimony indicates that agent orange, purple and white were sprayed at Gagetown on many dates other than June 1966 and June 1967.
2. Data used by the Canadian Government to establish disability compensation for Canadian forces was flawed and misleading to its conclusion.
3. Results so far indicate that the issue of toxic chemicals used at Gagetown for numerous years may be more of a US Federal issue rather than a State of Maine issue given the fact the Veterans Administration established June 1966 and June 1967 as presumptive dates for disability compensation claims.

Recommendations

1. The entire 180,000 acres at the Gagetown training facility must be declared a presumptive toxic chemical site.
2. In concert with the above recommendation, current presumptive dates of June 1966 and June 1967 must be expanded to ensure all dates that were sprayed by the Canadian and U.S. Government be included as validated by Dr. Sears and Messrs. Goode, Franklin and Commission members.
3. If approved, this would give National Guard and U.S. Army personnel authority to file claims predicated on current Veterans Administration protocol, procedures and evidence recommendations. These would be the same criteria for Veterans exposed to agent orange during the Vietnam War.
4. If successful, this would allow those veterans to pursue medical care, compensation and protect spouse and children who may eventually be impacted by secondary exposure to these chemicals.

Submitted by:

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Aroostook Veterans Alliance