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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3229

March 26, 2001

General Robert Flowers, Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 203 14

Dear General Flowers:

I am writing to express my concern about the inadequacy of funding allocated by the Army Corps of Engineers for remediation of the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) property, a Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (DERP-FUDS) site located in Niagara County, New York, in my Congressional District.

During World War II, the Army manufactured TNT at a facility on the 7,500-acre LOOW site, which included a power plant, hospital, fire department, water supply system, and waste treatment system. Between 1956 and 1960, a portion of the site was used to produce high-energy rocket fuel. As Department of Defense operations decreased over the years, property was sold; today the property is owned by individual homeowners, corporations, a local school district, and federal, state and local governments.

Recently, I met with Lieutenant Colonel Glen DeWillie of the Buffalo District to discuss the status of the Corps' efforts with respect to the LOOW site. The Corps estimates that the work that remains to fully remediate the site will cost at least \$29 million (in today's dollars), with funding coming from the DERP-FUDS program. This estimate includes the cost of studies, risk assessments, and remediation tasks necessary to restore the site so that it no longer poses a risk to public health or the environment.

It is my understanding that the Buffalo District's capacity for conducting remedial studies and activities at the site in FY2002 is \$4 million. With these funds, the Buffalo District could make significant progress toward remediating the site by: 1) demolishing a formerly used wastewater treatment plant; 2) conducting a comprehensive risk assessment of the entire property; 3) investigating underground pipelines; and 4) beginning closeout of clean areas within the site.

It is my further understanding that the Buffalo District has corresponded with the New York District, which manages the DERP-FUDS program, to request \$4 million for work at the LOOW site in FY2002. In response, the Buffalo District was informally advised that based on past funding levels it should anticipate receiving only \$1 million. This is unacceptable.

Remediation of this very significant FUDS site is of the utmost importance to myself and my constituents, who live, work, and learn in and around the LOOW property. The speed with which the site can be remediated, thereby protecting public health and the environment, depends entirely on adequate annual funding for the Buffalo District. I urge you to do everything possible to allocate sufficient funds for the Buffalo District to make timely progress toward complete remediation of the LOOW site.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. LaFalce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "LaFalce" clearly distinguishable.

JOHN J. LaFALCE
Member of Congress

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cc: LTC Glen DeWillie, Buffalo District