

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

June 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Longley,

Thank you for overseeing California's water resources and drinking water needs. I write today to respectfully request information regarding the Trichloroethylene (TCE) clean-up efforts in Ripon, California.

As you know, TCE contamination of Ripon's groundwater dates to the 1970s, when Nestlé Inc. used the chemical to extract caffeine from coffee and discharged the untreated water into the city's sewers. Internal investigations conducted by Nestlé determined that TCE was discharged at several locations, including the former facility at 230 Industrial Avenue, the City of Ripon industrial wastewater pond, and near the intersection of Stockton Avenue and Fourth Street. In 1986, Nestlé stopped using TCE and implemented remedial actions to capture and contain TCE.

More than thirty years later, remnants of TCE are impacting Ripon's quality of life and potentially threaten human health. The City of Ripon recently shut down a drinking water well due to elevated levels of TCE-related chemicals. Despite evidence of TCE in Ripon's groundwater, there has been no reported soil vapor or indoor air testing for this chemical in over a decade. This is particularly concerning given that the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment confirmed that TCE air contact creates an odorless vapor which has been linked to cancer.

Given the serious consequences of failing to treat TCE exposure, I respectfully request the following information:

1. Since finding traces of TCE in Ripon, Nestlé Inc. commenced remediation efforts in 1986; however, Ripon continues to find evidence of TCE today. How are the State and Regional Water Boards overseeing this process to ensure its managed in a timely and responsive manner?
2. What is the timeline for remediating TCE in Ripon's groundwater?
3. Given the severity of this issue and the threat it poses on the public health, why has the State or Regional Water Board not pursued more federal assistance, including from the Superfund Program?
4. Based on the State's own assessment, TCE poses a public health concern. It has been reported that your agency will require Nestlé Inc. to conduct air vapor testing. Can you confirm these plans and provide a timeline for their results?

Thank you, Chairman Longley, for your attention to this critical issue.

Respectfully,

Rep. Josh Harder