

Representative Rothman Briefs Health and Human Services Regional Administrator on Vieques, Puerto Rico

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Washington, DC – On June 30, 2010, Representative Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, met with Jamie Torres who was appointed last April by Secretary Sebelius of Health and Human Services (HHS) to oversee the Department's Region 2 operations in New York, New Jersey, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Rep. Rothman discussed his ongoing efforts to provide the people of Vieques, Puerto Rico with access to quality medical care and address the unacceptable environment the island faces. The situation in Vieques is a result of nearly 60 years of bombing by the U.S. Navy following World War II until 2003 that has left the 21 mile-long island contaminated with heavy metals like mercury, aluminum, lead and other toxic chemicals like napalm. These contaminants have impacted the soil, crops, marine life, and all those who live on this small island.

Last year, Rep. Rothman successfully pressed the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to re-examine the agency's inadequate 2003 health assessment of Vieques. Rep. Rothman continues to fight for justice for the people of Vieques.

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