

## Congressman Rothman: More Questions Than Answers in ATSDR Report

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CONTACT: Aaron Keyak

office: (202) 225-5061

cell: (202) 905-6361

email: [aaron.keyak@mail.house.gov](mailto:aaron.keyak@mail.house.gov)

Washington, DC &ndash; Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) released the following statement on the new health assessment by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico:

The new Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) report should have addressed the concerns of the residents of Vieques and the alarmingly high rates of serious and disabling health care problems on the island. I am disappointed that the ATSDR report provided more questions than answers. It is astonishing that the ATSDR seems to still hold that decades of bombing on the island by the US Navy with military ordnance pose no harmful health effects to the people of Vieques.

The report, in acknowledging many still unanswered questions concerning the health of the people of Vieques, made a number of recommendations on which additional efforts should be undertaken. As the author of the Vieques Recovery and Development Act &ndash; which would set up a toxic research center and hospital, among other measures on the island &ndash; my bill&rsquo;s and this report&rsquo;s recommendations for additional action should now be fully supported and financed by the Congress and the Executive Branch. I will continue to work with the Obama Administration to ensure that the current recommendations from both the ATSDR and the White House Taskforce on Puerto Rico on Vieques are carried out as soon as possible.

We must deliver justice to the people of Vieques, Puerto Rico. It is unacceptable that the ATSDR report still leaves the residents of Vieques without a clear explanation of the health risks associated with decades of US Navy activity on their island. The time for the US government to address the serious health care concerns of the people of Vieques is long overdue.

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