

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR

JOINT RESOLUTION, REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE AND ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE MAINE NATIONAL GUARD WHO TRAINED AT THE MILITARY SUPPORT BASE IN GAGETOWN, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

WE, your Memorialists, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Maine now assembled in the Second Regular Session, most respectfully present and petition the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as follows:

WHEREAS, Resolve 2023, chapter 95 established the Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission; and

WHEREAS, the commission was tasked with studying the impacts of exposure to harmful chemicals, including 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, or TCDD, as well as other dioxins including that known as Agent Orange, on veterans who served at the Canadian military support base in Gagetown, New Brunswick, Canada; and

WHEREAS, the commission has striven to demonstrate through scientific evidence the connection between exposure to those chemicals while training and subsequent negative health outcomes, but it is the responsibility of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to make this determination and provide care and assistance; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that Vietnam War veterans who were exposed to tactical herbicides, including Agent Orange, suffered harmful effects and were subsequently diagnosed with conditions or illnesses associated with that exposure; and

WHEREAS, those who served at the Gagetown military support base include members of the United States National Guard, who were never deployed but were nevertheless exposed to these harmful chemicals, which are known to have been tested at Gagetown; and

WHEREAS, access to medical care and assistance through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is therefore unavailable for these National Guard members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs recognize the effects of exposure to harmful chemicals, including TCDD and other dioxins, on members of the United States National Guard who trained at Gagetown and who are diagnosed with conditions or illnesses associated with that exposure as has already been done for Vietnam War veterans and others; and be it further

RESOLVED: That We further urge and request that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs review the most recent scientific reporting on the effects to human health of exposure to dioxins, to conduct independent environmental sampling and analysis at Gagetown related to dioxins and risks to human health, to examine health outcomes for individuals who

trained there and to provide access to medical care and assistance for those individuals; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable Joseph Biden, President of the United States; the President of the United States Senate; the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States; the Honorable Denis Richard McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.