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**J. Randy Forbes**  
**United States Congress**

**4th District, Virginia**

November 6, 2009

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The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki  
Secretary of Veterans' Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I commend you for your recent decision to establish a service-connection for Vietnam Veterans who suffer from three additional illnesses that can result from exposure to Agent Orange. Your decision based on the results of an independent study of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) demonstrates your commitment to our Nation's veterans.

At a time when many of our veterans already face long waits to qualify for benefits, the new designation will certainly lead to an increase in the number of claims made to the Department. As you know, an estimated 2.6 million Americans served in Vietnam and may have been exposed to Agent Orange. Each of our veterans deserve a timely response to their claim once they have filed it. Does the Department of Veterans' Affairs have a plan in place to ensure that veterans with existing claims with the VA or those opening new claims arising from the new service-connected illnesses (ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's, and B-cell leukemia) will not face increased delays during the claims process? Does the Department of Veterans' Affairs have the resources or capacity to address these new claims in a timely manner without additional resources?

Thank you for addressing these questions so that I can assure the veterans in Virginia's Fourth Congressional District that this well-deserved benefit will not further slow down a claims process that, at times, can be frustrating for so many. If you have any further questions, please contact me or Jim Aiken from my staff at (202) 225-6365 / [jim.aiken@mail.house.gov](mailto:jim.aiken@mail.house.gov). Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you. With kind personal regards, I am

Yours Truly,

J. RANDY FORBES  
Member of Congress