



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

JUL 28 2009

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0905

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your June 25, 2009, letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson, regarding an investigation into reports of a cancer cluster in Palm Beach County. Your inquiry has been referred to my office for a response.


Your letter references a potential cancer cluster in Palm Beach County and requests that EPA immediately coordinate with the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in an investigation of these reports. My staff has been in contact with the FDOH and learned that the FDOH, in a coordinated effort with the Palm Beach County Health Department (PBCHD), is aggressively investigating the potential cancer cluster in a community know as The Acreage. At the present time PBCHD is working with the community to collect the health data necessary to document the existence of a cancer cluster. Additionally, PBCHD is being proactive in sharing information with the public through postings on its website and hosting public outreach sessions. The FDOH will be collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control to produce a final report next month.

We, in a coordinated effort with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), have taken steps to evaluate potential environmental problems at The Acreage. Both EPA and FDEP have reviewed our databases and found no known sites or releases of hazardous substances in and around The Acreage. Additionally, PBCHD has reviewed sampling data from private drinking water wells in The Acreage and found no levels of concern in the ground water. We stand ready to provide immediate assistance and support to local, state or federal agencies should the need arise for additional environmental investigation.

In conclusion, EPA believes that appropriate actions are underway to investigate a possible cancer cluster and that FDOH epidemiologists are conducting the necessary studies. However, we will continue to communicate with our local, state, and federal partners so that we can stay abreast of the situation.

If you have questions or need additional information from the EPA, please contact me or the Region 4 Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (404) 562-8327.

Sincerely,



A. Stanley Meiburg
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Michael McGeehin, NCEH-CDC
Michael Sole, Secretary FDEP
Ana M. Viamonte Ros, Surgeon General FDOH