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Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, Labor, Procurement,
and Statistics, Research, and Planning

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Senator Perez Holds Hearing on Open Burn/Open Detonation Pit Urges Use of Viable Alternatives

Guam, Mariana Islands - Senator Sabina Perez today held an informational hearing in regard to a renewal permit application for an Open Burn/Open Detonation Pit at Andersen Air Force Base, submitted to the Guam Environmental Protection Agency for review.

“Open burning and open detonation are based on a ‘dirty technology’ with ‘virtually no emission controls’, which have resulted in extensive contamination and staggering cleanup costs that can reach more than half a billion dollars at a single site,” said Senator Perez.

Across the US, the sites of open burning of hazardous wastes have led to 54 separate federal Superfund declarations and have exposed the people who live near them to dangers that will persist for generations. The 2019 *The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* report documented the existence of viable alternatives to dispose of energetic wastes. Open Burn/Open Detonation Pits are now considered a source category for toxic ‘forever chemicals’ that threaten to contaminate our drinking water.

“We must remain vigilant in preventing perfluorinated compounds from entering into and forever contaminating our water supply any more than they already have,” said Senator Perez. “Open Burning and Open Detonation of munitions are old and outdated practices. We can do better, and we should do better, for the safety of our people and the generations that will inherit the land,” Senator Perez added.

The purpose of the informational hearing was to increase awareness of the existence and history of the open burn and open detonation pit on Guam, the health and environmental dangers associated with open burning and open detonation, permitting information and the AAFB application under review by Guam EPA, the availability of viable alternative technologies, and the experience of other US communities exposed to toxic releases from open burning and detonation from military bases.

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