

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 19, 2019

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
US Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington DC, 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

We write in light of the recent *Procopio* decision, which settles the debate over service in the territorial water of Vietnam, to urge you to take swift action in resolving outstanding claims from our Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans.

As you know, the Federal Circuit court found that service in the territorial seas unambiguously qualifies under the Agent Orange Act of 1991 as service in the Republic of Vietnam. Further, the court recognizes and affirms the intent of Congress in passing that statute, which was to provide coverage to all affected veterans who suffer the effects of herbicide exposure. We reminded the Department of that when it appeared before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on August 1, 2018, and are disheartened that the matter has become so prolonged.

Now that the court has spoken, and on behalf of the over 14,500 Blue Water Veterans that have been denied their claims for a condition presumed to be covered by Agent Orange exposure, we urge you to make the appropriate adjustments and ensure all of the blue water veterans have timely access to the care and benefits they have earned.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator