

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

M60050.001841



NAVY AIR Bases, WESTERN AREA  
EL TORO (SANTA ANA), CALIFORNIA 92709-8001

M60050.001841  
MCAS EL TORO  
SSIC # 5090.3

INF  
5800  
JA/0034k

11 AUG 1987	
SANTA ANA REGION	
SEND	DATE
	AUG 13 1987
ENT	8/13
KIC	8/17
JRB	8/13
SDO	8/17

James R. Bennett  
Executive Officer  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region  
6809 Indiana Avenue, Suite 200  
Riverside, CA 92506

Dear Mr. Bennett:

In reply to your letter of July 8, 1987 regarding Cleanup and Abatement Order No. 87-97 (MCAS El Toro TCE Investigation), it is our position that the order does not have a sufficient basis in fact and does not reflect adequate geohydrological investigation.

Our primary concern is with the conclusion stated in paragraph number 15 of the order, to the effect that the United States Marine Corps is the perceived cause of the TCE contamination. It is clear that virtually all of the contamination has been found outside the base perimeter, on land owned by the Irvine Company. There are numerous other potential sources of such contamination, including the old International Raceway facility, and there does not seem to be any substantiation for the conclusion that the contamination does in fact come from this Air Station.

Rather than attempting to resolve this problem by means of a cleanup and abatement order without sufficient technical basis, we would far prefer to work with the Board in determining the actual source and extent of any contamination. A principal concern is the lack of proper drilling and testing off base. As you are well aware, and as the order itself reflects, our Installation Restoration Program (formerly known as the Navy Assessment and Control of Installation Pollutants program) is under way, and will, when completed, give us a far better picture of the extent of any such pollution aboard, or emanating from, the Station. The Installation Restoration Program (IRP) study will include an historical record search for all possible contributing sources, but will not include physical investigation off base. Indeed, it is uncertain whether the Department of the Navy has authority to expend its funds on an investigation of contamination discovered on private property, absent some preliminary indication that the source of contamination is the federal facility. In short, the problem has not been sufficiently studied and should be studied further.

It is our strong recommendation that, in addition to the monitoring wells being installed on board MCAS El Toro, such wells also be installed on Irvine Company property, and that The Irvine Company be required, as the landowner, to bear the cost of such investigation. Other landowners, if any, in the surrounding areas should be similarly required to participate in a comprehensive study of the problem.

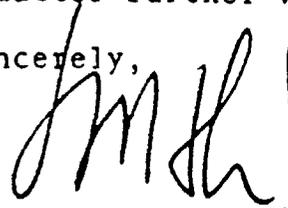
By this approach, we will then be able to determine the full extent of any contamination and properly allocate responsibility to the various landowners, including the federal government, for the cost of any necessary cleanup and abatement.

It is, of course, our intention to proceed with our investigation and plan of action, on a timetable comparable to that set forth in your Order, but only insofar as it refers to investigation on board the Air Station itself.

We wish to assure you that it is our intent to assist and cooperate with the Board, in all appropriate ways, to identify, isolate and clean up any contamination which is satisfactorily determined to be the responsibility of the federal government. We solicit and encourage your support and assistance in properly identifying the extent of that responsibility and fairly allocating to other responsible sources of such pollution their fair participation in cleanup and abatement efforts.

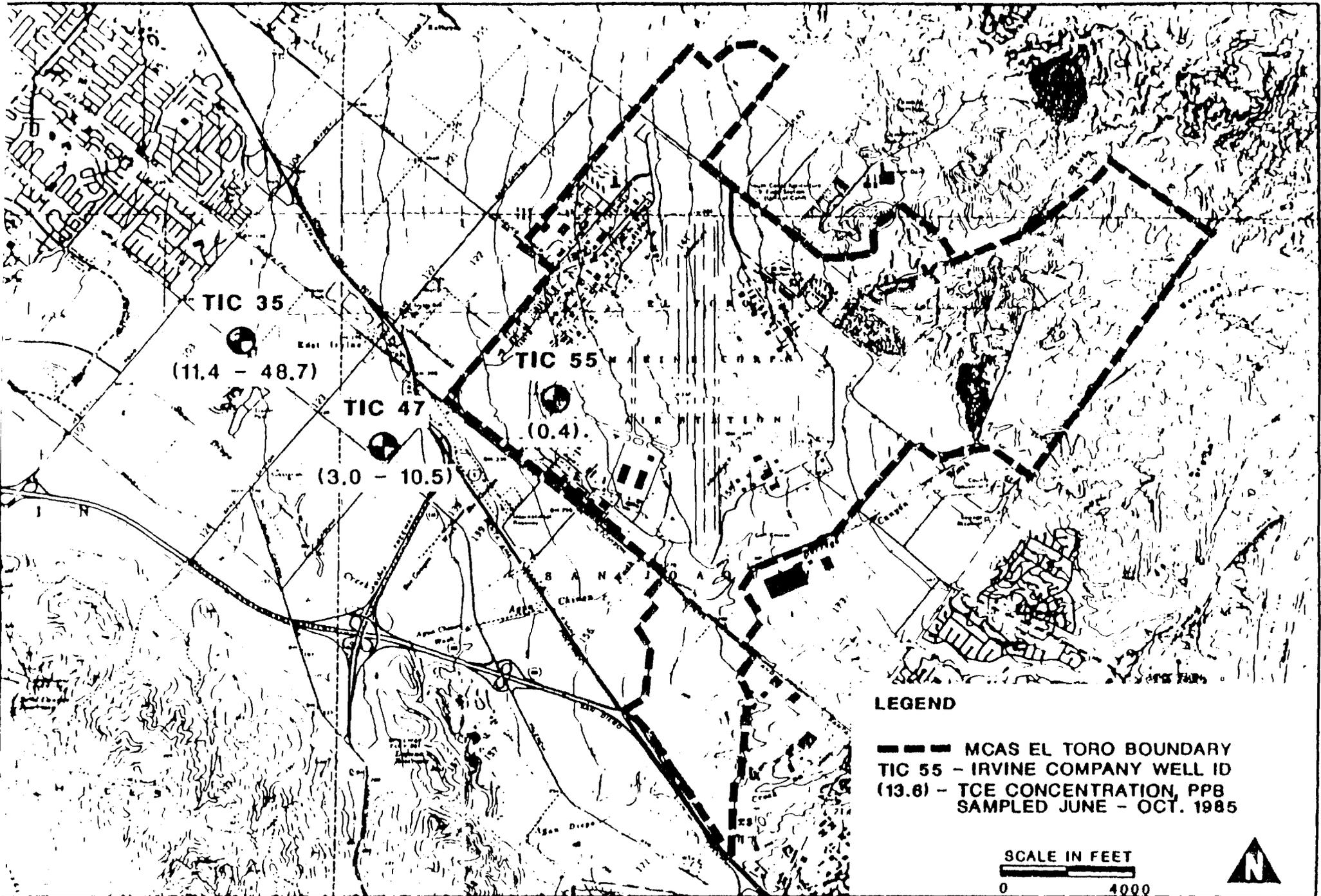
We look forward to discussing this matter further with you.

Sincerely,



S. R. HOLM, JR., CAPT, CEC, USA  
Director, Facilities Mgmt. Dept.  
By direction of Commanding General

Copy to:  
The Irvine Company, Attn: Sat Tamarabuchi



PLUMBER INVESTIGATION MARINE CORPS  
AIR STATION EL TORO, CALIFORNIA

GROUP OF SUPPLY WELLS WITH  
REPORTED TCE LEVELS (ppb)

F U E 1-1

16. This action is being taken by a regulatory agency to enforce a water quality law and is, therefore, exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.) in accordance with Section 15321, Chapter 3, Title 14, California Administrative Code.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, pursuant to Section 13304, Division 7, of the California Water Code, the United States Marine Corps shall:

1. By September 15, 1987, submit a draft supplement to the proposed Perimeter Investigation Plan of Action that includes necessary off-site investigations to determine the extent of any ground water contamination attributable to the MCAS El Toro facility.
2. By January 15, 1988, initiate the proposed Perimeter Investigation Plan of Action and the supplementary off-site investigation as approved by the Executive Officer.
3. By the 10th day of each month, submit a progress report summarizing the investigation activities for the previous month.
4. By June 15, 1988, submit an interim report containing the findings of the field investigations performed to date and any available analytical results.
5. By September 15, 1988, submit a draft report on the perimeter investigation and the supplementary off-site investigation.

If, in the opinion of the Executive Officer, this order is not complied with in a reasonable and timely manner, the Board will consider referral of this matter to the Attorney General for judicial enforcement.

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JAMES R. BENNETT  
Executive Officer

July 6, 1987