

## LARSON APPLAUDS END OF MILITARY TRAINING ON VIEQUES

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WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) issued the following statement on the end of decades of U.S. military exercises on Vieques, a small island off the coast of Puerto Rico. The U.S. military had previously used an area of the island for weapons testing for roughly 60 years.

"I am thrilled and relieved that we have seen the end military exercises on the island of Vieques," said Larson. "This day has certainly been a long time coming for the residents of the island, who have had to endure the negative health and environmental consequences of the live fire exercises that have been conducted there since the 1940s.

"The people of Vieques have a mortality rate 40 percent higher than that of Puerto Rico, a 27 percent higher risk of dying from cancer, and a 70 percent higher risk of dying from diabetes. In April of 1999, a resident of the island, David Sanes-Rodriguez, was accidentally killed during a training exercise. They have paid a high price for the military weapons testing that has gone on there, and I am pleased that it finally came to a permanent halt," said Larson.

Larson had visited the island in 2000 to gain first hand knowledge of life there and the complications that arose from the testing exercises conducted by the military. He had also written Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush several times since 1999 asking that military training on the small island be ended. In 2001, it was announced that the military's use of the island would end this year.

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