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N45 Outlook

THIS IS MY final column as director of OPNAV N45. By the time this magazine crosses your desk and appears online, Rear Admiral Lou Cariello will have taken over the reins here and be applying his experience to the numerous issues in which we're engaged. It's complex work that is vital for executing the Navy mission today and maintaining capability for the future. I'm excited about the opportunities he'll have to both lead and learn from the dedicated staff here at N45.



As policymakers and subject matter experts, we must continue minimizing and mitigating risks to the training and testing our forces require. An aspect of this is our approach for interfacing with our regulatory partners for environmental permits. With the challenges those agencies face in analyzing huge numbers of permit requests, the Navy must do everything in our power to ensure that the requests we submit for regulatory review meet all key requirements on the first go round. We also need to communicate early and often with regulators to help create shared, realistic expectations for our consultations. Success on this front can help keep our training and testing on track—but failure could force us to delay activities that are essential for readiness.

Contamination of drinking water by perfluorinated compounds (PFC) from firefighting chemicals continues to be of concern for the Navy. Over the past several months as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has increased awareness and created a lifetime health advisory, we've ramped up sampling efforts on and around facilities where firefighting training and/or aviation accidents have occurred and are providing bottled water where needed to ensure people have safe water to drink. We continue to inform affected communities, develop policies and funding plans to eliminate PFCs from the supply chain, and look at options for remediating contaminated water. We must, and we will, do the right thing to protect our own workforce and our neighbors near our installations.

The examples above are just two of a host of important energy, environmental, and compatibility issues which N45 and our colleagues throughout the Fleets and systems commands are working daily, with the clear goal of empowering the Navy to perpetually meet its national security mission.

In closing, I offer my sincere thanks for all you do. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve with you. 📍

Rear Admiral Doug Morton
Director, Chief of Naval Operations Energy and Environmental Readiness Division