

PRESS RELEASE

# Justice Department and Department of the Navy Announce Voluntary Elective Option for More Efficient Resolution of Camp Lejeune Justice Act Claims

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Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department and the Department of the Navy (DON) today announced the finalization and publication of a voluntary process, called the “Elective Option,” to help veterans and others more quickly resolve qualifying claims under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act (CLJA) of 2022. This option supplements other processes currently available under the CLJA, which remain in place.

The CLJA is a provision of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act, which was signed into law on Aug. 10, 2022. The CLJA allows those who file claims and lawsuits to potentially recover for injuries caused by exposure to contaminated water at the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune from mid-1953 through 1987.

Established jointly by the Justice Department and DON, the new Elective Option provides a framework for the DON to resolve certain CLJA claims quickly, equitably and transparently. In order to be eligible for the Elective Option, a claimant must first submit an administrative claim to the DON. To date, more than 93,000 CLJA claims have been filed with the DON.

The Elective Option allows the DON to focus its review on a few key aspects of a CLJA claim, such as the type of injury alleged and the amount of time a claimant worked or resided at Camp Lejeune. Narrowing the scope of the review enables faster validation and, ultimately, extension of settlement offers. The Elective Option provides similar settlement offers to claimants with similar exposures and injuries with similar evidence of causation.

“The Elective Option is a critical step in bringing relief to qualifying claimants impacted by the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, who will now have an avenue for receiving quick and early resolution of claims under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act,” said Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta. “We are grateful for the continued partnership of the Department of the Navy and federal agencies in developing and administering this framework.”

“The Elective Option presented today should be of great interest to eligible Americans who seek a streamlined process to resolve their claims,” said Under Secretary of the Navy Erik Raven. “We recognize this takes a whole-of-government response, and along with DOD and DOJ, we are linked with Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies to support a fair and streamlined process. We are committed to ensuring that every valid Camp Lejeune claim is resolved fairly and as expeditiously as possible.”

Within the framework, the DON can make settlement offers to qualifying claimants with diseases that the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has determined are linked to the chemicals found in the water at Camp Lejeune. Award amounts are tiered, largely based on the ATSDR’s classification of the strength of the evidence linking the contamination with a particular disease and the amount of time the individual spent at Camp Lejeune.

**Tier 1 Diagnoses:** Claimants with diseases for which the ATSDR has substantiated evidence of causation – kidney cancer, liver cancer, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, leukemia and bladder cancer – would receive settlement offers of \$450,000, \$300,000 or \$150,000, depending on whether the claimant was exposed to Camp Lejeune water for over five years, between one and five years or between 30 and 364 days, respectively.

**Tier 2 Diagnoses:** Claimants with diseases to which the ATSDR has linked possible evidence of causation – multiple myeloma, Parkinson’s disease, kidney disease (end stage renal disease), systemic sclerosis/systemic scleroderma – would receive settlement offers of \$400,000, \$250,000, or \$100,000, depending on whether the claimant was exposed to Camp Lejeune water for over five years, between one and five years or between 30 and 364 days, respectively.

Claims involving death would receive an additional \$100,000.

The Elective Option supplements other mechanisms for resolving claims currently available through the normal administrative claims or litigation processes. Claimants not eligible for the Elective Option may await finalization of their administrative claim or pursue litigation and engage in any broader settlement discussions occurring through court proceedings in the Eastern District of North Carolina. The Justice Department will

screen already-filed lawsuits and will extend settlement offers in qualifying cases that are similar to awards under the Elective Option.

Those interested in learning more about the Elective Option should visit [www.navy.mil/clja](http://www.navy.mil/clja).

Individuals who think they qualify for relief under the CLJA can follow the instructions available on that site to submit a claim and provide requisite supporting documentation. There is no requirement to retain a lawyer to file a claim or subsequently pursue an expedited resolution. Claims that have already been filed with DON do not need to be refiled.

Payments under the Elective Option are not offset by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits or VA medical care, and they do not impact ongoing treatment and support provided by the VA.

More information is available at [www.navy.mil/clja](http://www.navy.mil/clja)