



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PROCLAMATION

**AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND BURN PIT EXPOSURE AWARENESS MONTH
March 2022**

WHEREAS, while on active duty, military service members may have been exposed to a variety of airborne hazards including the smoke and fumes from open burn pits, sand, dust, particulate matter, general air pollution common in certain countries, smoke from oil well fires, fuel, aircraft exhaust, and other mechanical fumes; and

WHEREAS, exposure to airborne toxins has been linked to a wide range of conditions including respiratory, neurologic, and various cancers. Researchers lack information as to the exact contents of burn pits and epidemiologic studies lack information regarding their effects; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the United State Department of Veterans Affairs created an Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR) for servicemembers who were deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations any time after August 2, 1990 or Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, 260,992 Veterans and servicemembers completed the questionnaire since the start of the AHOBPR, including 6,427 Pennsylvanians; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately 240,000 Pennsylvania Veterans designated as Gulf War veterans, this includes service in Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, proper screenings and regular health checks among Gulf War veterans could detect issues earlier. Early detection can save veterans lives and provide researchers with the information needed to build proper analysis of airborne hazards and burn pit exposure effects; and

WHEREAS, the United State Department of Veterans Affairs continues to add new presumptive conditions such as asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis for veterans who were possibly exposed to Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits; and

WHEREAS, dozens of cancers have been associated with exposure to fumes from burn pits or other toxic airborne materials. Veterans find it difficult or even impossible to receive USDVA care for these illnesses.

THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim March 2022 as AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND BURN PIT EXPOSURE AWARENESS MONTH. I encourage all Pennsylvanians to encourage and support our veterans who were deployed to Southwest Asia and Afghanistan to receive regular health screenings to detect early signs of cancer and other ailments.

*GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor,
at the City of Harrisburg, this twenty-third day of
March two thousand twenty-two, the year of the
commonwealth the two hundred forty-sixth.*



Tom Wolf
TOM WOLF
Governor