

## **Benner Township PFAS Investigation – End of Year Update 2023**

On January 14, 2023, PA adopted revised MCLs as the drinking water and cleanup standards for the PFAS compounds PFOA (14 ppt) and PFOS (18 ppt). In response to the standard decreasing from the previous Health Advisory Level of 70 ppt, DEP provided bottled water to 15 additional residences as a temporary water source until Point-of-Entry Treatment (POET) systems could be installed in these homes. Sampling efforts have continued throughout 2023, and to date 31 residential water supply wells have been identified as exceeding the current MCLs and all have been provided with POET systems. Four businesses along High Tech Road had exceedances of the MCLs in their supply wells; two of which have connected to the public water line, one is receiving bottled drinking water from DEP, and the fourth has indicated they do not consume the water.

Soil sampling was also conducted along High Tech Road and on property near the UPA terminal in 2023. To date, 53 soil borings have been installed, each with both a surface and sub-surface sample collected. PFAS impacts tend to be confined to the shallow/surface soils with the exception of one boring at UPA. With a history of construction projects resulting in soil disturbance, this soil likely was disturbed and was not in-place.

DEP had our contractor, HDR, conduct an engineering feasibility study to determine whether a public water line extension into the Walnut Grove Estates development could be provided as our final remedy for this community. The feasibility study report (FS Report), submitted on May 4, 2023, identified a number of challenges for both the design and maintenance of such a system. DEP followed up the FS Report with a May 31 meeting between DEP, the Benner Township Water Authority, Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority, State College Borough Water Authority, College Township Water Authority, and a representative from Benner Township. The discussion led to further concerns as some of the details in the FS Report, such as usage per residence, were based on an average and not actual usage in this population. Many of the issues are related to the relatively small number of homes that would connect to the line and the extra maintenance required to provide quality water. These maintenance needs would include but are not limited to “blow-outs” to remove stagnant water on a more frequent basis than is typical, chlorination station(s) to treat water residing in the lines due to low usage and added infrastructure to accommodate the change in elevation within Walnut Grove Estates. The additional technical design requirements would add to the operation and maintenance costs of the extended system. Further discussion was tabled pending further sampling by DEP and the anticipated promulgation of a federal MCL that is lower than the current PA MCLs, as this may result in additional consumers.

Due to the proposed federal MCL, DEP evaluated sample results for supply wells with concentrations below current MCLs but above those proposed by EPA. In areas where these wells are located, DEP reached out to additional residences with private supply wells to request well information and to collect samples. In response, 5 additional samples have been collected in the University Acres development as well as 6 samples from residences along Ellman Lane and Rock Road. Results have all been below current MCLs, with 10 above the proposed standard. There have also been detections of PFAS above proposed federal MCLs in two wells on PA Fish and Boat Commission properties. DEP has compiled this information to prepare for a response to mitigate PFAS in any wells that exceed the proposed federal MCL once it is in place.

DEP continues to monitor the contaminant plume through sampling of private supply wells. All POET systems are being sampled on a regular basis to confirm that they are working as designed to remove PFAS. At this point in time, DEP has reached out to any Potential Responsible Persons we are aware of to request information on their historic use, if any, of PFAS compounds in their manufacturing or other operations. DEP has begun discussions with one Potential Responsible Person to continue any investigation activities needed to determine the extent of impacts to groundwater, surface water and soil, to provide any ongoing or new mitigation where needed, and to recover costs the DEP has put forth during our investigation. These discussions are ongoing and expected to continue into 2024.