



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
Governor

April 22, 2016

Dear Ms. Amico, Ms. Dalton, and Ms. Davis:

Thank you for your letter concerning water contaminated by perfluorochemicals (PFCs) and the state's ongoing efforts to address PFC water contamination. I understand your concerns regarding the uncertainty about the direct effects of PFCs on human health and their potential association with a host of negative health effects, and I appreciate the attention that you have all worked to bring to this important issue, as well as Testing for Pease's continued advocacy, education and community engagement efforts.

The quality and safety of drinking water is critical to the health and well-being of our families, vibrant communities and our economy, and we must always work to ensure that all Granite Staters and visitors to our state have access to safe, clean drinking water. We must act aggressively to respond to water contamination, and I continue to push state and federal public health and environmental officials to address water contamination now and protect against it in the future. Part of that effort includes calling on the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other federal agencies with expertise and resources in this area, to answer as quickly as possible important public health questions about short- and long-term exposure levels and risks.

Water contaminated by PFCs is a national problem that requires federal guidelines and a consistent, science-based approach. The EPA has indicated that it will soon release lifetime health advisories for PFC exposure, and I have joined my fellow governors in calling on them to issue those advisories as soon as possible. In the interim, in New Hampshire, we have relied on using the best available, peer-reviewed science as our guide. But we also recognize that there are state-to-state inconsistencies that have further contributed to the uncertainty regarding PFCs, which is understandably concerning – further underscoring the need for a uniform standard set by the EPA to guide states as we work to address this issue of national concern.

Earlier this year, I sent a joint letter with Governor Andrew M. Cuomo of New York and Governor Peter Shumlin of Vermont calling on the EPA to set a lifetime health advisory for certain PFCs so that states can assess the safety of drinking water, and the EPA is expected to issue a lifetime health advisory for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) soon. Once that information is released, I will work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) to review the new advisory and evaluate its potential applicability to the state's ongoing efforts.

At the same time, I realize that there are other PFCs that are of concern, particularly perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), as this PFC is found at higher levels in the blood of the Pease community compared to the general population. Unfortunately, the science on the effects of PFHxS and many other PFCs on human health is limited, which is why I have called on the federal government to conduct greater research in this area. This is also one of the reasons why the State of New Hampshire continues to work with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to help address health concerns for those exposed to PFCs as national study into the health effects from PFCs continue. We will continue to closely evaluate the best available science and all options for statewide public health advisories for different PFCs. The EPA's anticipated upcoming announcement will be an important step in that process, and we will be reviewing the federal advisory closely as we consider statewide recommendations.

With respect to health recommendations to help guide healthcare providers, New Hampshire's Division of Public Health continues to assist providers in understanding the current knowledge regarding PFCs and to communicate current recommendations, including issuing several public health alert network messages regarding PFCs, creating a Frequently Asked Questions document for providers and providing other resources on the potential health effects of PFCs. The Division of Public Health will continue to update its recommendations and resources for healthcare providers as information becomes available, focusing on recommendations that are effective in assisting healthcare providers in monitoring patients and providing the necessary care.

Both NHDES and NHDHHS have worked to provide resources to the public, including through their websites. As the science surrounding PFCs evolves and more is learned about the impact of these contaminants in New Hampshire and other states, we must strive to ensure that the public has access to the best available information, resources and documents. With that in mind, I am directing both departments to look at what other states and our federal counterparts are doing with their websites – and the ATSDR website in particular – in an effort to streamline the information provided and ensure that the public has ready access to these important resources.

While we work to implement long-term treatment of contaminated water systems, we are providing alternative drinking water options as appropriate. As NHDES continues to closely monitor PFC levels in the Harrison and Smith wells, and as we await the EPA's lifetime health advisory, we will continue to evaluate options for potential alternatives. In the meantime, I encourage all concerned individuals, families and businesses in the Pease community to contact the State's public inquiry line at 603-271-9461 with any and all questions related to PFCs and steps that can be taken to address concerns.

As state environmental and public health officials are working vigorously to strengthen our comprehensive response to water contamination, we are also focusing on providing immediate access to safe drinking water alternatives when appropriate, addressing the health and environmental concerns of affected individuals and communities, and working to ensure access to clean drinking water now and into the future. Testing for Pease and other concerned groups and individuals have played an important role in the efforts that have taken place thus far, and your engagement will continue to be critical to strengthening our efforts.

Thank you again for your letter and ongoing work on this important issue. Our state agencies are working with affected communities and individuals to ensure that all Granite Staters have access to clean drinking water, and we know that there is still much more work to do.

With every good wish,



Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor