



Jack Blalock
Mayor

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

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November 29, 2017

Timothy H. Watkins
Director, National Exposure Research Laboratory
USEPA Office of Research and Development
109 TW Alexander Dr MC 305-01
RTP, NH 27711

RE: City of Portsmouth's Request for Assistance Assessing Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances

Dear Dr. Watkins,

The City of Portsmouth has been actively working with the United States Air Force Civil Engineering Center, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) with responding to PFAS contamination of drinking water wells serving the Pease Tradeport drinking water system in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Considerable focus has been applied to developing a comprehensive water quality monitoring and sampling program for the area in and around the drinking water wells. To date, three and a half years of sampling has taken place since the discovery of this contamination in May 2014. Information gathered from this program has been vital in assessing and responding to the contamination. Very early on in the process, the technical response team chose to follow the NHDES's recommendation that 23 PFAS compounds be analyzed to gain a more comprehensive insight into the breadth of contamination beyond the two compounds, PFOA and PFOS, with EPA drinking water health guidance.

The contamination of the Pease wells has also lead to a considerable amount of community involvement to address concerns about the extent of the contamination, the potential health effects and the long-term water supply and drinking water treatment plans. This led to the creation of a City committee (the Haven Well Community Advisory Committee) to allow for public involvement, the reactivation of the Pease Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), and creation of a Community Assistance Panel (CAP) for Pease as a way for the community to participate directly in health activities by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). A citizens group, *Testing for Pease*, was also organized to advocate for a long-term health plan and education for those impacted by the PFAS contamination. Their efforts led to the ATSDR to implement a blood testing program for those effected by the drinking water contamination. Many public meetings and other associated communications have also taken place. The meetings generally discuss the latest information about the contamination and offer the public an opportunity to provide input and questions. One question that comes up often is the

one about historic compounds, what types of fire fighting foam was used over time by the Pease Air Base and what we might not know about the compounds that are in the water so that they get appropriate treatment by the current and proposed drinking water treatment systems.

At the request of *Testing for Pease*, I recently convened a meeting with City staff, NHDES and *Testing for Pease* representatives to discuss the PFAS sampling. At the meeting *Testing for Pease* asked that additional PFAS analyses be performed by Dr. Christopher Higgins, whose work was part of a recent paper published in June that tested water samples from a military site with known PFAS contamination from fire fighting foam and he was able to identify multiple other PFAS compounds not routinely tested for by standard labs. Based on the findings of his latest research, *Testing for Pease* stated that “the Pease community is concerned that there are many other PFAS compounds in the Pease (and possibly Portsmouth) water supply. Dr. Higgins lab has technology to run samples of water and look for additional PFAS compounds that the Air Force or the city is not currently testing for.” In follow-up, Brandon Kernen of NHDES mentioned that they had been in contact with the EPA’s National Exposure Research Laboratory to perform additional testing of PFAS compounds at other contaminated sites in New Hampshire. He has since shared correspondence with us regarding their request dated June 22, 2017 and your initial response dated November 13, 2017.

With this letter we are formally requesting that the City of Portsmouth be included in any such study as we would greatly appreciate your assistance in knowing as much about this contamination as possible. Please feel free to contact me directly at (603) 610-7200 or by contacting our Deputy Director of Public Works, Brian Goetz, at 603-766-1420 or via email at bfgoetz@cityofportsmouth.com

Sincerely,



Jack Blalock
Mayor

c.: John P. Bohenko, City Manager
Andrea Amico, *Testing for Pease*
Clark B. Freis, NHDES
Peter Forbes, US Air Force Civil Engineering Center
Michael Daly, EPA Region 1
Scott Hilton, NHDES