

9/18/2020

Roger Walton, US Air Force

Michael Daly, USEPA Region I

Peter Sandin, NH Department of Environmental Services

Dear Mr. Walton (US Air Force), Mr. Daly (USEPA), and Mr. Sandin (NHDES);

We are writing to request that all residential homes in Newington, New Hampshire immediately receive notification and alternative drinking water, where levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals in their private wells exceed the New Hampshire maximum contaminant levels (MCLs).

Based on the discussions in our last Pease Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting on August 5, 2020¹, there are private wells supplying drinking water to Newington residents where concentrations of PFAS chemicals exceed the state of New Hampshire's MCLs. The state of New Hampshire initially approved drinking water MCLs for 4 different PFAS last July 2019². The MCLs were almost immediately challenged in court by a corporate polluter in October 2019³ and held up the enforcement of these MCLs until this June 2020. However, the litigation brought forth by 3M was officially dissolved as of September 4, 2020⁴, and the MCLs became effective on July 23, 2020.

The NHDES concluded the appropriate PFAS MCLs based on the most current, peer-reviewed science to be most protective of vulnerable populations. All residents in Newington deserve clean drinking water that meets safety standards that are enforceable under NH Law.

On several occasions over the last two years, members of the RAB raised questions about the Air Force's compliance with the NH DES PFAS MCLs. At a RAB meeting on September 18, 2019⁵ (nearly one year ago) when the question was asked members received no commitment from the Air Force to comply with the NH DES MCLs and provide alternative drinking water to these Newington residents.

We are frustrated that more than a year of the NH MCLs being adopted into law and almost a year since raising our concerns publicly at a RAB meeting, there has not been any action taken by any government organization (NH DES, US EPA, or US Air Force) to supply these residences with safe drinking water. The people living in these homes are being exposed to toxic PFAS chemicals, from a release known and acknowledged to be the fault of the Air Force, and deserve access to clean drinking water at no cost to them.

Regardless of who ultimately assumes cost responsibility for this matter, it is urgent that Newington residents know and understand the public health threat, as determined by the NH DES, that levels of these dangerous chemicals in excess of the enforceable standards in their drinking water pose to their families. This is an essential function of our government and blame and cost reimbursement should be assigned later while residents have access to clean, safe drinking water as a first priority.

We request that NH DES, US EPA, and/or US Air Force act with urgency to remedy this situation, notify residents and comply with the NH DES MCLs, and provide clean water to Newington residences whose private drinking water wells have been contaminated by the Department of Defense and contain unsafe levels of PFAS toxins as defined by NH Law.

Sincerely,

Andrea Amico, Co-Chair Pease RAB

Mindi Messmer, PG, CG, Pease RAB Community Member

Margaret Lamson, Pease RAB Community Member

Michael Donahue, Pease RAB Community Member

Jameson Paine, Pease RAB Community Member

Lulu Pickering, Pease RAB Community Member

Dennis Malloy, State Representative Greenland/Newington, NH

Ted Connors, Newington Board of Selectman

References:

- 1) Air Force urged to supply Newington homeowners with safe water, 8/5/2020

<https://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20200805/air-force-nh-urged-to-supply-newington-homeowners-with-safe-water>

- 2) New Hampshire sets tough drinking water standards for PFAS, 7/18/2019

<https://apnews.com/5d88f6c89b814a068ad7cbea5832b5e4>

- 3) 3M suit aims to block tougher PFAS standards for water in NH, 10/1/2019

<https://www.fosters.com/news/20191001/3m-suit-aims-to-block-tougher-pfas-standards-for-water-in-nh>

- 4) Judge rules in NH's favor in 3M's attempt to block PFAS protections, 9/4/2020

https://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20200904/judge-rules-for-nh-in-3mrsquo-s-bid-to-block-pfas-protections?fbclid=IwAR1hfXbNX8syXha_PyPkudG-e_dRkQjLgWqHkhfzglUZsHRswXBVX2-7s-k

- 5) Five Newington wells show PFAS contamination, 9/24/2019

<https://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20190924/five-newington-wells-show-pfas-contamination>