



BOROUGH OF ESSEX FELLS

**255 ROSELAND AVENUE
ESSEX FELLS, NJ 07021
(973)226-3400 FAX (973)228-4439**

April 18, 2024

Dear Residents and Water Customers,

Enclosed is a regulatory notice advising you of the results of water quality tests conducted on our water system in the first quarter of 2024. Test results confirm that the water we are supplying to you continues to meet New Jersey's drinking water standard for PFOA and satisfies all other state and federal water quality requirements. Please review the notice for details.

Update on Construction of Treatment Facilities

Since October 2021, our water utility has kept PFOA levels low – and within the NJ standard of 14 parts per trillion (ppt) -- by constructing a temporary treatment facility, removing some wells from service, and adjusting operating protocols, including how we blend our water sources. These measures have been effective, but they are interim steps, designed to manage PFOA levels in the water being delivered until we can complete construction of larger, permanent treatment facilities that will comprehensively remove PFOA from the water.

Construction of our primary permanent PFOA treatment facility remains on track for completion this summer. Upon startup, this new facility will remove PFOA from the water drawn from 13 of our 16 wells, effectively reducing the PFOA level in the water that we distribute from where it is today (6.26 ppt in the first quarter of 2024) to “non-detectable.”

Our remaining 3 wells have been offline since 2021, not providing water to the public. Design plans for the installation of PFOA treatment systems for these 3 wells were submitted to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection in June 2023 and are awaiting NJDEP approval. We hope to complete construction of these additional PFOA facilities in 2025, at which point we will bring the applicable wells back into service, thereby restoring the system to full capacity.

New EPA Regulation of PFAS

On April 10, 2024, the United States Environmental Protection Agency finalized its new drinking water regulation, establishing the first-ever national standards for PFOA and 5 other types of per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The new federal standards will be phased in over time. Public water systems have 3 years to complete initial monitoring for the applicable PFAS and 5 years to implement solutions if monitoring shows that levels exceed the applicable maximum contaminant levels (MCLs).

As a result of the steps that we have taken in recent years to reduce PFOA, our water system is well ahead of the new federal requirements. The new federal rule will lower the

mandated MCL for PFOA to 4 ppt – which is more stringent than the current NJ standard of 14 ppt. However, once our main PFOA treatment facility begins operating this summer, the water that we supply will already satisfy the new federal standards for PFOA and other types of PFAS, years before those federal standards become effective.

For us, the main impact of the new EPA regulation will be economic. Lowering the applicable MCL for PFOA from 14 to 4 ppt means the filtration media at our treatment plants must be replaced more frequently. The costs of purchasing new media and disposing of spent media are substantial today. Given the vast number of water systems in the United States that will need to build water filtration plants in the coming years in response to the new federal standards, these costs are likely to materially increase going forward.

Where You Can Find More Information

The Essex Fells Water Department is required to send its water customers quarterly regulatory notices until permanent PFOA treatment systems are operating at all three of our treatment plants, including the two we are not currently using. These updates are meant to keep you informed about your drinking water and the capital improvements we are making in response to new regulations and the September 2021 PFOA exceedance previously reported to you.

For additional information, including copies of our prior notices and information on PFOA from the NJ Department of Health and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, please consult the Borough's website (<https://www.essexfellsboro.com/pages/pfoa>).

Sincerely,

Edward A. Davis
Mayor
Borough of Essex Fells

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Essex Fells Water System Had Levels of Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) Above A Drinking Water Standard.

The Essex Fells Water System Incurred a One-Year Violation Because Our Permanent Treatment Facility Was Not in Operation by August 17, 2022, One Year After the Date of Our Initial PFOA Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) Exceedance.

April 18, 2024

As you know, in the third quarter of 2021 our water system violated a New Jersey drinking water standard for PFOA. The level of PFOA in the water being delivered to you has been within the New Jersey standard since October 2021, but we must complete additional steps to remediate the original PFOA violation on a permanent basis at all of our treatment facilities and restore the system to its full capacity. As our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we have already done and are doing to correct this situation.

You were previously notified of the PFOA maximum contaminant level (MCL) violations in public notices issued on September 16, 2021, December 15, 2021, March 15, 2022, June 15, 2022, October 19, 2022, January 19, 2023, April 19, 2023, July 19, 2023, October 18, 2023 and January 18, 2024. Per the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, we will continue to provide you with an updated public notice every 3 months until we complete all approved remedial measures and return to compliance with the MCL at all of our treatment facilities, including those that are currently offline. The most recent public notice and updates regarding this matter are available at <https://www.essexfellsboro.com/pages/PFOA>.

Essex Fells Water Department routinely monitors for the presence of federal and state regulated drinking water contaminants. New Jersey adopted a maximum contaminant level (MCL), for PFOA in 2020 and monitoring began in 2021. The MCL for PFOA is 0.014 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) (or 14 parts per trillion) and is based on a running annual average (RAA), in which the four most recent quarters of monitoring data are averaged. During the third quarter of 2021 (July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021) we initially exceeded the MCL for PFOA at all three (3) of our treatment plants (TPs). Per the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act, our water system is required to take any action necessary to bring the water into compliance with the applicable MCL within one year from the initial violation.

Treatment plants (TPs) TP002015 and TP003020 remain above the standard but since September 2021 have been offline, not delivering water to the public. It should be noted that, for these treatment plants, the RAA for PFOA is based on samples collected previously as there are no current results since the source is no longer being used. See the table and “What is being done” below for more information.

TP001001 is the only treatment plant currently in use and the most recent results are within the drinking water standard. Please see the table below. This was initially accomplished in October 2021 by shutting down some of the 13 wells that supply TP001001 and adjusting operational protocols. We also constructed an interim PFOA treatment facility for two (2) of our other wells at TP001001, which began operating on May 19, 2022. In March 2023 we received NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) approval to construct a larger, permanent PFOA treatment facility at TP001001, which is on track to be completed in summer 2024. See “What is being done” below for more information. Nevertheless, since the larger, permanent treatment facility was not constructed and operating at TP001001 by August 17, 2022, one year after the date of our initial PFOA MCL exceedance, our water system incurred an additional violation of the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act.

A sample of water leaving treatment plant TP001001 taken on March 20, 2024 had a PFOA level of 0.00636 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (6.36 parts per trillion). With these latest results, the RAA for PFOA based on samples collected over the last year is now 0.01076 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (10.76 parts per trillion).

The first quarter 2024 PFOA value, the RAA based on samples collected during the past four quarters, and the current status of each treatment plant are summarized in the table below.

Treatment Plant (TP)	Most Recent Sample Collection Date	First Quarter 2024 PFOA Values	Running Annual Average	Current Status of Treatment Plants
TP001001	3-20-2024	0.00636 µg/L	0.01076 µg/L	Online and in service. Interim treatment facility in operation as of 5-19-2022 on 2 of 13 wells. In 2023, we received NJDEP approval for and began construction of a larger, permanent treatment facility for all 13 wells. We anticipate completing the permanent facility in summer 2024.
TP003020	N/A	N/A	N/A	Offline as of 9-24-2021. Design plans for the installation of a PFOA treatment system at this treatment plant, which treats 2 wells, was submitted to the NJDEP in June 2023 and are under review. Subject to third party approvals, public contract bidding and supply chain contingencies, we hope to award contracts in summer 2024 and complete construction in early 2025, at which point this treatment plant and the 2 wells will be returned to service.
TP002015	N/A	N/A	N/A	Offline as of 9-24-2021. Design plans for the installation of a PFOA treatment system at this treatment plant, which treats 1 well, were submitted to the NJDEP in June 2023 and are under review. Subject to third party approvals, public contract bidding and supply chain contingencies, we hope to complete construction in 2025, at which point this treatment plant and the applicable well will be returned to service.

We are required to keep you informed of the status of any treatment plant with a PFOA MCL violation even if it has been shut off and is no longer delivering water, as the violation persists. That is why TP003020 and TP002015 are listed in the above table, even though they are presently offline.

What is PFOA?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is a member of the group of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), used as a processing aid in the manufacture of fluoropolymers used in non-stick cookware and other products, as well as other commercial and industrial uses, based on its resistance to harsh chemicals and high temperatures. PFOA has also been used in aqueous film-forming foams for firefighting and training, and it is found in consumer products such as stain-resistant coatings for upholstery and carpets, water-resistant outdoor clothing, and grease proof food packaging. Major sources of PFOA in drinking water include discharge from industrial facilities where it was made or used and the release of aqueous film-forming foam. Although the use of PFOA has decreased substantially, contamination is expected to continue indefinitely because it is extremely persistent in the environment and is soluble and mobile in water.

What does this mean?

**People who drink water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time could experience problems with their blood serum cholesterol levels, liver, kidney, immune system, or, in males, the reproductive system. Drinking water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time may also increase the risk of testicular and kidney cancer. For females, drinking water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time may cause developmental delays in a fetus and/or an infant. Some of these developmental effects may persist through childhood.*

* For specific health information, see https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf.

What should I do?

- Anyone concerned about their health should consult with their personal healthcare provider.
- The New Jersey Department of Health advises that infant formula and other beverages for infants, such as plain water or juice, should be prepared with bottled water when PFOA is elevated in drinking water.
- Pregnant, nursing, and women considering having children may choose to use bottled water or a home filter designed to remove PFOA for drinking and cooking to reduce exposure to PFOA.
- Other people may also choose to use bottled water for drinking and cooking to reduce exposure to PFOA or a home water filter that is certified to reduce levels of PFOA.
- Home water treatment devices are available that can reduce levels of PFOA. If a water treatment device is used, it is important to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for maintenance and operation. For more specific information regarding the effectiveness of home water filters for reducing PFOA, visit the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) International website, <http://www.nsf.org/>. NSF does not certify reduction of PFOA to the NJ MCL for PFOA.
- Boiling your water will not remove PFOA.

For more information on the New Jersey state standards, see <https://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/pfoa-pfos-faq.pdf> or <https://www.nj.gov/dep/pfas/drinking-water.html>.

For additional information regarding PFOA from the federal government, including fact sheets and answers to frequently asked questions, please refer to the following resources from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>. Note that EPA has not established standards for PFOA.

What is being done?

As indicated above, Essex Fells has constructed a PFOA treatment facility for two (2) of our wells at TP001001 and has shut down the other two treatment plants (TP002015 and TP003020). We have also adjusted operational protocols, including the manner in which we blend our water sources that remain in service, in order to reduce the overall level of PFOA in the water being delivered to our customers.

Design plans for a larger permanent PFOA treatment facility at TP001001 were submitted to the NJDEP in August 2022 and approved by the NJDEP in March 2023. Construction commenced in 2023. We anticipate this facility will begin operating in summer 2024. Upon completion, the new treatment facility will remove PFOA contaminants from the water drawn from 13 of our 16 wells.

Design plans and specifications for the installation of two additional PFOA treatment systems, at TP002015 and TP003020, were submitted to the NJDEP in June 2023. Once approved and constructed, these additional projects will remove PFOA on a permanent basis from water drawn from our 3 remaining wells and allow us to bring those 3 wells back into service. Subject to third party approvals, public contract bidding and supply chain contingencies, we hope to award contracts for the construction of the new treatment system at TP002015 in summer 2024 and complete construction in early 2025. Subject to the same contingencies, we hope to complete construction of the new treatment system at TP003020 later in 2025.

To view all the drinking water quality data collected by Essex Fells Water Department visit https://www9.state.nj.us/DEP_WaterWatch_public/index.jsp and enter NJ0706001 for the PWSID.

For more information, please contact William Ryden at 973-650-1029 or wryden@anderson-denzler.com. You may also contact the Essex Fells Water Department by mail at 318 Runnymede Road, Essex Fells, NJ 07021.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by Essex Fells Water Department, Water System ID#: NJ0706001.

Date distributed: April 18, 2024