



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