

From: Schuren, Alyssa
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2016 6:03 AM
To: LaClair, Jolinda; Chen, Harry; Ross, Chuck; Bothfeld, Diane; Erickson, Nancy; Cragin, Lori; Schwer, Chuck; Ellis, Rebecca; Herrin, Glenn
Cc: Garton, Joanne
Subject: RE: PFOA/N. Bennington Email to Legislators
Attachments: PFOA Summary for LegislatorsvAS.docx

Categories: PFOA

Done. Can you please forward your Department/Agency logos to Joanne Garton (ccd here) to put on a header? Thanks. -AS

Alyssa B. Schuren
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From: LaClair, Jolinda
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 9:12 PM
To: Schuren, Alyssa <Alyssa.Schuren@vermont.gov>; Chen, Harry <Harry.Chen@vermont.gov>; Ross, Chuck <Chuck.Ross@vermont.gov>; Bothfeld, Diane <Diane.Bothfeld@vermont.gov>; Erickson, Nancy <Nancy.Erickson@vermont.gov>; Cragin, Lori <Lori.Cragin@vermont.gov>; Schwer, Chuck <Chuck.Schwer@vermont.gov>; Ellis, Rebecca <Rebecca.Ellis@vermont.gov>
Cc: Garton, Joanne <Joanne.Garton@vermont.gov>
Subject: RE: PFOA/N. Bennington Email to Legislators

Alyssa: Letter is very well done and communicates key messages. I recommend that before or after the Background paragraph we add something like: 'quick response by the SoV to establish an Incident Command System which DEC leads in partnership with VDoH as well as the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets to address the breadth of health and environmental issues and concerns...' Important to re-emphasize the x-agency partnership working in tandem. Thanks for all your hard work...Jolinda

From: Schuren, Alyssa
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 8:10 PM
To: LaClair, Jolinda; Chen, Harry; Ross, Chuck; Bothfeld, Diane; Erickson, Nancy; Cragin, Lori; Schwer, Chuck; Ellis, Rebecca
Cc: Garton, Joanne
Subject: PFOA/N. Bennington Email to Legislators

All- Attached is a draft email to the Vermont Legislature updating them on the North Bennington/PFOA situation. Do you have any edits?

Jolinda- Thanks for the idea. -AS

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March 23, 2016

Summary for Legislators: PFOA Contamination in North Bennington

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture have been working jointly to address the health, safety, and environmental concerns created by the discovering of PFOA in North Bennington, Vermont.

Background

After hearing news about contaminated drinking water surrounding a Chemfab plant in Hoosick Falls, New York, a private citizen contacted local legislators in early February 2016 with concerns about another former Chemfab plant in North Bennington. Legislators reached out to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), which promptly sampled five private drinking water wells and the North Bennington municipal water supply for perfluorinated compounds and volatile organic compounds. The five wells tested showed the presence of perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA) at concentrations above the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) drinking water health advisory level of 20 parts per trillion (ppt). No other volatile organic contaminants were detected in any of the samples. The public drinking water supplies in North Bennington and Bennington have been tested and are not affected.

What is PFOA?

PFOA is a manufactured chemical used to make household and commercial products that repel water, oil, stains and grease. It is widely found in nonstick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, water replant clothing, paper and cardboard food packaging, and fire-fighting foam. It is used in the production of Teflon; Teflon-coated products may contain residual PFOA.

Why is PFOA contamination a health concern?

PFOA persists for a long time in the environment, particularly in water. Ingestion of PFOA results in elevated PFOA levels in the blood, which may affect an individual's cardiovascular system, kidneys, or liver. VDH has produced a fact sheet with health-related information and guidance available at: http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/pfoa/PFOA_health_facts.pdf

Brief History of the Plant

Chemfab operated in North Bennington from 1970 through 2000, when it was purchased by Saint-Gobain. It was closed in 2002. During its operation, the facility primarily applied PTFE

(Teflon) coatings to fiberglass fabrics by dip coating the fabrics in a liquid bath of micron size PTFE particles with various additives (likely including PFOA). The Teflon was then melted onto the fabrics and dried in on-site ovens. The DEC received more than 30 air complaints over the years that the facility operated in North Bennington. Three enforcement actions were brought against the company. Ultimately, Chemfab was purchased by Saint-Gobain and moved to New Hampshire. A 2002 Bennington Banner article noted that the company moved because of pressure from the State of Vermont to include air pollution control equipment that was not required in New Hampshire.

Vermont DEC's Response

After receiving the initial well water results, DEC committed to testing all private water wells within a 1.5-mile radius of the former Chemfab facility. This sampling plan addressed the uncertainty surrounding the transportation mechanism of PFOA, accounting for possible distribution by air, surface water and/or groundwater.

Well Water Sampling

DEC Waste Management and Prevention Division (WMPD) teams went door-to-door collecting drinking water samples for over two weeks. The final round of well sample results was received on Sunday, March 20, completing the initial recommended drinking water investigation within a 1.5-mile radius of the former Chemfab plant. In total, approximately 185 water samples have been taken to date. Of the wells sampled, 104 were above 20ppt, 11 were less than 20 ppt, and 63 wells did not detect PFOA. The results generally show levels of PFOA closest to the former Chemfab plant. The 1.5-mile radius has now been expanded in three areas (map: <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/PFOA.htm>). Additional testing of the North Bennington public water system, including samples from the elementary school, have confirmed no PFOA contamination.

North Bennington Soil Sampling

DEC has approved a soil sampling screening plan proposed by Saint-Gobain's contractor. This sampling effort is being performed to identify if any further soil sampling is needed around the former plant. The sampling plan includes more than 100 samples at over 25 locations. Results will be available in the coming weeks. Soil samples were collected in eight different directions from the former Chemfab plant at varying distances to attempt to determine if soil contamination exists around the former plant and at locations where if there is any soil contamination it would be expected to be at its highest concentrations at these locations. If the results are positive for PFOA, DEC will expand to individual residences. We have recently learned that soil sampling at the Hoosick Falls site in New York found very little PFOA contamination to the soils.

Second Site: Northside Drive, Bennington

The former Chemfab facility had its original location in Bennington on Northside Drive. The overwhelming majority of individuals in this area are on municipal water, which has been tested and is not impacted by PFOA. The DEC took a water sample from one private well on Northside Drive. Results show levels of PFOA above 20ppt. The family has been alerted and bottled water is being delivered. A municipal hook up is available at this site. The DEC is working with Bennington officials to review well data to determine if there is any other well sampling that needs to be done in the immediate area in the immediate future.

Pownal Water Sampling

Last Wednesday, EPA Contractor Weston Solutions collected three water samples from the Pownal Fire District #2 system, which is located 1,000 feet from the former Warren Wire Plant #1. A water sample was collected from the supply well and two samples were collected from homes along the distribution line. Results from this sampling are expected within one week.

Bottled Water & Treatment Systems

Bottled water remains available at the North Bennington Village Variety Store, located at 9 Route 67 West, and is being delivered to impacted homes. Two water tanks from which residents can draw water are located in the parking lot across from the former Chemfab plant located at the intersection of Water Street and Route 67a. Point of Entry Treatment (POET) systems are being offered to impacted residents through Saint-Gobain's contractor, Culligan Water Technologies. Culligan has installed 20 systems so far and is scheduling the remaining 84 installations with impacted homeowners.

Notifying Affected Residents

DEC continues to notify residents of water test results on an ongoing basis and is coordinating the installation of water treatment systems. VDH is also reaching out by phone to residents who have just received test results that show their well is contaminated with PFOA. DEC is operating a PFOA hotline (828-1038) from 8am – 4:30pm daily to take calls from the public and coordinate with contractors and field teams. An information center has been set up at the VDH offices located at 324 Main Street in Bennington and is currently open from 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday. Officials from DEC and VDH are on hand to answer follow up questions from residents.

DEC is regularly posting and updating public information on its dedicated webpage:

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/PFOA.htm>

VDH is also posting on a dedicated webpage: <http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/pfoa.aspx>

Saint-Gobain Response

Representatives from Saint-Gobain continue to be responsive and cooperative. The company has agreed to pay for drinking water, soil, surface water and sediment sampling; bottled water for impacted residents within a 1.5-mile radius of the former Chemfab site; installation and maintenance of POET systems for impacted residents within the 1.5-mile radius; and engineering services to evaluate the possibility of connecting private well owners to the municipal water system. In addition, Saint-Gobain has agreed to conduct a site investigation of the former Chemfab site and clean up any releases of PFOA from the site.

Governor Shumlin Visits North Bennington

Governor Shumlin visited North Bennington on March 8 to visit with impacted residents and town officials, and to tour the impacted area. He also held a community meeting to discuss the issue. In a letter to the federal Environmental Protection Agency dated March 10, Governor Shumlin, New York Governor Cuomo and New Hampshire Governor Hassan officially requested that the EPA use the best available science to re-examine its guidelines on PFOA contamination and recommendations for assessing drinking water safety. Additionally, the governors called for adequate funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and its companion, the Clean Water Revolving Fund, to address much-needed improvements in our water infrastructure.

The Governor returned to the area on March 16 to host a community meeting at Bennington College. The Governor, DEC, VDH and Agency of Agriculture officials to announce and expanded water sampling area, to sign people up to have their wells tested and to answer questions for more than two hours.

Media Coverage

The press continues to cover the PFOA contamination almost daily. With input from the DEC, the Governor's office has been releasing regular updates on sampling results and available resources for North Bennington residents. All press releases are available on-line: <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/PFOA.htm>