Maryland
Department of
the Environment

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TO: Community Water Systems
Nontransient Noncommunity Water Systems
Local Environmental Health Departments
Maryland Department of Health

FROM: Lee Currey, Director, Water and Science Administration LCC

DATE: December 18, 2019

RE: PFAS

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the Maryland Department of the Environment's efforts to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in Maryland's drinking water sources. In 2016, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established Health Advisory Levels for two PFAS: Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS). EPA set the Health Advisory Levels at 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and PFOS taken individually or in combination. Since then, the potential presence of PFAS in the nation's drinking water sources has become a national concern. The Health Advisory that was established in 2016 is non-enforceable and non-regulatory, but provides basic information on the health effects, analytical methodologies, and treatment technologies associated with the PFOA and PFOS contaminants to state agencies, public health officials, drinking water system operators, and the public. Further information on the EPA Health Advisory can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos

**Recent EPA Actions and Commitments**

On February 14, 2019, EPA published the PFAS Action Plan. Currently, there are a number of different legislative proposals in Congress to address the challenges associated with PFAS. Highlighting the attention that PFAS commands, EPA made a commitment in its Action Plan to make a regulatory determination on whether or not to establish a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFOA and PFOS. However, a few states that have experienced significant PFAS detections in water supplies such as New Jersey and New Hampshire have established MCLs PFAS and other states like Pennsylvania, have initiated their own process for establishing a MCL. The work being done in these states is on a fast-track and could benefit Maryland by leveraging their administrative and scientific work on this topic.

EPA's Action Plan is taking a pro-active, cross-agency approach to address the PFAS contamination problem. EPA's full plan can be accessed through the following link:
https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-02/documents/pfas_action_plan_021319_508compliant_1.pdf

A factsheet highlighting the EPA Action Plan is also attached.
Recently, through their Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Program, EPA awarded $6 million to eight organizations to better understand the environmental risks that PFAS pose and to identify practices to best manage these risks. More information about the STAR Program and these projects can be found at:
https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncer_abstracts/index.cfm/fuseaction/recipients.display/rfa_id/643/records_per_page/ALL

**Maryland Background and Actions**

Forty-two water systems in Maryland were monitored for PFOA and PFOS under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 3 (UCMR3) between 2012 and 2015. As a result of this study, PFOA was detected in only one sample in Maryland (at Perryman in Harford County) at a level below the 2016 EPA Health Advisory of 70 ppt. More information on EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 3 can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr

In addition, the Department of Defense (DOD) monitored military facilities throughout the country and in 2018 released a report on its investigation of PFAS at military bases. This report identified four sites in Maryland with PFAS contamination in groundwater. Since that time, PFAS compounds have been identified in at least four additional military installations. As additional testing proceeds there may be other DOD installations in Maryland where PFAS compounds are found in the groundwater. A brief summary of the findings at the eight DOD facilities are summarized below. The sites in Maryland are:

1) Two military facilities in the Annapolis Area – PFAS were detected in shallow groundwater at two sites in the Annapolis area, one near the Worthington Basin across the Severn River from the Naval Academy and the second at Bay Head Park, near the Woods Landing development.
2) Fort Meade Army Base – PFAS were detected in the monitoring wells near Tipton Airfield.
3) U.S. Naval Research Laboratory at Chesapeake Beach – PFAS were detected in shallow monitoring wells on the base. Low levels of PFAS have been found at a few off-site private drinking water wells, no detections of PFOA or PFOS were above the health advisories.
4) The former U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center at White Oak near Silver Spring– PFAS were detected in monitoring wells. The Center is within the WSSC service area; no groundwater uses are in the vicinity.
5) Aberdeen Proving Ground – Aberdeen and Edgewood areas – PFAS compounds have been detected in three areas in the surficial aquifer (two areas along the Western Boundary at the Aberdeen Area) and the G-Street area at Edgewood. Additional work is underway to document the extent of contamination. One of the Western Boundary locations was the source of PFAS in the Harford County Perryman wellfield.
6) Naval Air Station Patuxent River – PFAS has been documented in the shallow groundwater at this facility. No detections were found in the confined water supply aquifers on the base.
7) Andrews Air Force Base - PFAS has been found in monitoring wells on the post. Potable water for the post and the vicinity is supplied by the WSSC.
8) Former Brandywine DRMO- PFAS has been found in monitoring wells on the property, but not in wells in the vicinity.

In Maryland, our goal is to establish a risk-based scientific approach to detect, evaluate and minimize the impact of PFAS in the State. Over the past year, MDE formed an agency-wide task force involving MDE's Land, Air and Water Administrations and established a three-step approach to the challenges of PFAS in Maryland:

1) Understanding the risk (through science, inspection and assessment);
2) Communicating the risk (through public information and explanation); and
3) Managing the risk (through appropriate funding, regulation and agency coordination)

As part of the first step, MDE is initiated a project to develop a GIS-based map to identify potential sources of PFAS in Maryland and to prioritize water sources for PFAS sampling. This effort will include surveying other State and local agencies that may have knowledge regarding the use of PFAS in specific jurisdictions, such as fire training areas utilizing foams. As we continue our efforts, MDE will report key findings. Additionally, MDE has prepared and placed on its website a document titled "Basic Information on PFAS." See this link: https://mde.maryland.gov/PFAS

We will continue to keep you updated of any progress, or news that might be of interest to your water system

If you have any questions regarding this email, please feel free to contact the Water Supply Program by telephone at 410-537- 3702 or by email at water.supply@maryland.gov.

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