

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wellesley PFAS Update for New EPA Regulations

April 12, 2024 (Wellesley, MA) – Following the release of new PFAS regulations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) this week, the Town of Wellesley is reassuring residents that PFAS removal treatments for water supplied to our community are proving to be effective and Wellesley drinking water is in compliance with all regulated standards.

This week, the [EPA issued national water standards](#) for several PFAS compounds (PFOA, PFO, PFNA, PFHxS, and HFPO-DA Gen-X Chemicals). The new rules also set a limit for mixtures of any two or more PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and GenX chemicals. These new standards are in addition to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) standards for so-called PFAS 6 compounds that have been in place since 2021.

PFAS, or **Per-** and **PolyFluorAlkyl Substances** are chemical compounds that are often referred to as “forever chemicals” as they stay in the environment for a long time and do not break down easily. As a result, PFAS may be widely detected in soil, water, air, and food. Most people have been exposed to them through a variety of consumer products including drinking water. Studies have shown that long-term exposure to elevated levels of PFAS can lead to adverse health effects.

As a result of the State regulations, in 2022 the Wellesley Department of Public Works implemented an interim treatment system for wells at the Moses Pond Drinking Water Treatment Plant. This response removed PFAS 6 at those wells to non-detect levels, and those wells continue to comply with the new, stricter Federal regulations.

The Town’s two other water treatment plants, the Rosemary Brook Longfellow Pond Plant and the Wellesley Avenue Plant, have also been meeting State regulations. All [testing results](#) are posted on the DPW webpages. However, under the new Federal regulations, those water treatment plants will likely have higher than acceptable results for one or more PFAS compounds. While municipalities have up to five years to meet the new Federal standards, Wellesley is taking precautions now and has already started planning for additional treatment.

“Both of those treatment plants are an important part of meeting the ongoing water needs of the community, although they are currently not in use due to maintenance and construction activities. We’re now awaiting additional guidance from MassDEP before any decisions are made about their continued use,” said DPW Director Dave Cohen.

To ensure Wellesley’s water needs are met, the Town will continue buying additional water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), which has been done since 2022. Tests on

MWRA water have resulted in non-detect PFAS levels, which comply with both the MassDEP and EPA requirements.

“Planned water rate increases will help address the costs of funding the additional treatment needed to remove PFAS from our local water supplies,” said Cohen. The Town is proposing a 4% increase in water rates starting on July 1, 2024, along with additional conservation measures to help ensure adequate supplies to meet the Town’s water needs.

The DPW has put together detailed webpages with PFAS information. That information is available at <https://wellesleyma.gov/1652/PFAS-Information>.

DPW officials are also working closely with the Wellesley Health Department to monitor this issue. Consumers concerned about potential health effects of PFAS should consult their individual health care professional.

Questions and Additional Information

For specific PFAS information and questions, please contact Water & Sewer Superintendent Steve Olson at 781-235-7600 or email dpw@wellesleyma.gov

For Health-related questions, please contact the Wellesley Health Department at 781-235-0135.

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