



## Department of Environmental Protection

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Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

June 18, 2021

### **Re: MassDEP PFAS Sampling Program Update**

Dear Boards of Health, Municipal Leaders, and Other Interested Parties:

This letter is to update you on the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Free PFAS Lab Analyses Program for Public Water Suppliers and the Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program. The Baker-Polito Administration sought and received funding from the Legislature to support testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water in both public water supplies and selected private wells to assist in characterizing PFAS levels in the Commonwealth. These programs provide the opportunity for laboratory analyses of samples from all Public Water Systems and selected private wells for PFAS at no charge.

As mentioned in our November 30<sup>th</sup> email, on October 2, 2020, MassDEP published its PFAS public drinking water standard of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) (or parts per trillion [ppt]) – for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS, which MassDEP abbreviates as “PFAS6.” This drinking water standard is set to be protective against adverse health effects for all people consuming the water. The standard is not applicable to transient non-community systems due to their users limited and transient access to the water. However, MassDEP performs a health assessment on these systems if elevated levels are found. The drinking water standard complements the PFAS waste site notification and cleanup requirements our Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup established in late December 2019. To review the November 30<sup>th</sup> email see: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/general-introduction-letter-and-private-well-pfas-sampling-program-faq/download>.

### **Free PFAS Lab Analyses Program for Public Water Suppliers**

There are 1,624 Public Water Systems in the Commonwealth. 1,475 are required to test for PFAS. These public water systems include:

- 449 community (COM) systems. A COM system is a public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.
- 243 non-transient non-community (NTNC) systems. A NTNC system is a public water system that is not a community water system and that has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves at least 25 of the same persons, or more, approximately four or more hours per day, four or more days per week, more than six months or 180 days per year, such as a workplace providing water to its employees, and;

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

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- 783 transient non-community (TNC) systems. A TNC system is a public water system that is not a community water system or a NTNC water system, but is a public water system that has at least 15 service connections or serves water to 25 different persons at least 60 days of the year. Some examples of these types of systems are: restaurants, motels, camp grounds, parks, golf courses, ski areas, and community centers.

Two hundred and seventy-five COM systems who provide drinking water to 96% of the Massachusetts population served by all public water systems have already tested for PFAS. For these COM systems, 267 systems serving 98% of the population served by COM systems that have tested for PFAS are providing drinking water that meets the MCL. Also, to date, 150 public water systems located in towns with environmental justice populations have tested for PFAS. These public water systems include 111 COM systems, seven NTNC systems, and 32 TNC systems. Twenty-three of these systems (22 COM systems and one TNC) serving towns with environmental justice populations have had PFAS6 results above the MCL. All systems with PFAS6 over the MCL are required to address the issue through short- and long-term solutions to ensure their consumers have information and access to alternate sources of water.

For up-to-date information on PFAS6 testing and for public water systems response actions, see Tabs 3 and 4 of the public water system storymap. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas#pfas-detected-in-drinking-water-supplies-in-massachusetts->

### **Grants and Loans for PFAS Treatment Planning, Design and Interim Response**

Part of the funding provided by the Legislature was designated for the PFAS Treatment Grant Program. Nearly \$5 million in grants were awarded to 26 PWS for the planning and design of PFAS treatment systems. These grants cover the costs of work associated with reducing or eliminating a public health risk from PFAS6 contamination of public drinking water and achieving PFAS6 levels compliant with the drinking water standard. In addition to the PFAS Treatment Grants, there are sixteen PFAS treatment construction projects totaling approximately \$180 million that have received, or have been offered, financing through the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF).

Additionally, the Commonwealth has appropriated \$2 million to MassDEP to help impacted public water systems to offset the cost of emergency response measures implemented to address PFAS6 contamination in drinking water. The Interim PFAS6 Response grant program provides funds (including reimbursement for costs and expenses already incurred) to impacted systems for interim public health measures implemented in response to the discovery of PFAS6 contamination in the drinking water supply. The funds will be distributed in three separate rounds. For more information and application deadlines see: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/water-resources-grants-financial-assistance#interim-pfas6-response-program->

For up-to-date information about sampling, grants and loans is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas#pfas-detected-in-drinking-water-supplies-in-massachusetts->

### **Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program**

The MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program is characterizing PFAS levels in towns that are not predominantly served by Public Water Systems. More than 500,000 residents of Massachusetts are served by private wells. MassDEP is partnering with its contractor, the University of Massachusetts (UMass), to undertake this program.

MassDEP has identified 84 towns where more than 60% of the population is served by private wells. Approximately 20 – 40 wells in each of these towns will be selected for PFAS drinking water lab analysis. A list of the 84 towns is provided in the updated FAQ at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-massdep-private-wells-pfas-sampling-program/download>. Within these 84 towns, MassDEP and its partner UMass, are working with local Boards of Health, legislative representatives, and other local partners to identify private wells for potential PFAS analysis, based on geographic distribution within the town and proximity to potential sources of PFAS. MassDEP is also working with its partners to conduct outreach to homeowners within the 84 towns.

To date, MassDEP and UMass have invited 44 local Boards of Health and other local officials to meet to discuss the program. Private well owners have been invited to apply to participate in this program and UMass or local partners will then contact the selected well owners to arrange for sampling.

MassDEP/the UMass contractor is continuing to work with partners to conduct outreach and encourage application and participation in the program. Thank you to those of you who have already taken the time to meet with MassDEP to provide feedback on the program in your town. If your town is one of the 84, and we have not yet met with you, we look forward to meeting with you in the future to discuss the program. We also ask that you help spread the word about the program by sharing the Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program infographic found here: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gMKOwegumJe4GefjttR0vSXTeiC\\_-zQT](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gMKOwegumJe4GefjttR0vSXTeiC_-zQT) via social media or any other means you use to connect with residents of your town.

For up-to-date information about the private well sampling, see the private well storymap. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-private-well-drinking-water-supplies-faq#pfas-testing-in-private-wells->

For more information about PFAS and MassDEP's efforts to address these contaminants, see: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>. To find information for clinicians and medical professionals, see: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/resources/index.html>. If you have further questions, you can contact MassDEP's Drinking Water Program at [program.director-dwp@mass.gov](mailto:program.director-dwp@mass.gov). Subject: PFAS

Thank you for your interest in working with MassDEP to characterize this emerging contaminant and to protect public health throughout the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Yvette DePeiza  
Director, MassDEP Drinking Water Program  
MassDEP

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