

# Lambertville & West Amwell Township

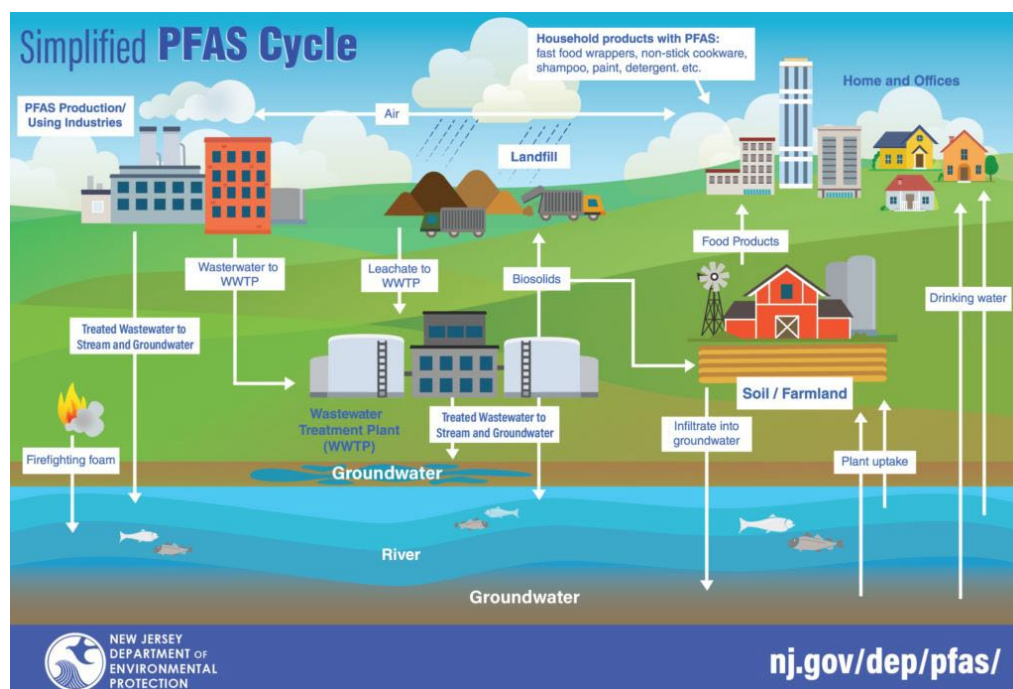
## Q & A for Virtual Public Meeting with

NJDEP on 12/3/2024



### Bureau of Environmental Measurements and Site Assessment Immediate Concern Unit (BEMSA-ICU) Questions

1. What is being done to investigate and determine the source of the contamination? How will the source of the PFAS contamination be located?
  - a. An unknown source investigation has been initiated for the Lambertville/West Amwell site under PI#1074364, Belvidere Avenue & Allen Street Groundwater Contamination. The unknown source investigation will include an area wide search for potential sources of PFAS contamination. Soil and groundwater investigations will be completed at any area determined to be a potential source of the potable well contamination.
  - b. In general, PFAS contamination has been identified nationwide in groundwater. Common sources of PFAS are:
    - i. Air and wastewater emissions from industrial facilities where they are made or used.
    - ii. Aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF firefighting foam) released during training or in response to a petroleum-based fire event.
    - iii. Sludge and effluent from wastewater treatment plants.
    - iv. Landfills where PFAS containing industrial waste or consumer products are disposed.
    - v. Residential septic systems that discharge PFAS containing consumer products to groundwater.
  - c. PFAS contamination is widespread throughout the nation. Where sources of PFAS contamination are identified in New Jersey, they are required to be cleaned up. For private wells contaminated with PFAS, the NJDEP's first priority is to install Point of Entry Treatment Systems (POET) to provide clean drinking water to residents.



2. Who is responsible for the clean-up?
  - a. Until a source can be identified, NJDEP's priority is to determine the extent of contaminated potable wells and provide information to residents on how they can obtain clean, potable water as part of the Spill Fund program.
3. Once the source is determined, will the responsible party be held accountable for costs associated with sampling and cleanup?
  - a. NJDEP will conduct an investigation to identify potentially responsible party(ies). If sources of PFAS contamination are found, the party(ies) will be notified of their responsibility(ies) to remediate the contamination.
  - b. If a source of contamination is discovered, the property owner will be required to retain a Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP). The LSRP will oversee the remediation of the contaminated site.
4. Once the source of contamination has been located, what is the plan to remove PFAS from the environment?
  - a. There are various methods that a responsible party may determine are best to remove PFAS from the environment. If a responsible party has been identified, they are subject to the [Technical Requirements for Site Remediation N.J.A.C. 7:26E](#). Pursuant to this, contamination must be fully delineated, all receptors must be identified, and remedial measures must be implemented.
5. What could go wrong during the clean-up process? What risks should we be aware of?
  - a. The clean-up process will occur in phases. The initial phase will include sampling of private wells in the area where PFAS contamination has been identified. If eligible, POET systems will be installed on impacted private wells using State funding. The purpose of this phase is to reduce risks to residents that are drinking water from their private well.
  - b. The next phase of the cleanup process will be an unknown source investigation. It is too soon in the cleanup process to speculate on potential risks of any cleanup. However, the purpose of the cleanup will be to reduce the risk of exposure to any PFAS contamination that may be identified.
6. At what point does NJDEP get involved with potable well contamination?
  - a. Once a cluster of contaminated potable wells are identified, BEMSA reviews the data to determine whether a potable well investigation should be initiated.
7. When (date) and how was the NJDEP informed of the contaminated potable wells in Lambertville/West Amwell?
  - a. On September 23, 2024, NJDEP received a letter from the Attorney for West Amwell Township regarding the identification of PFAS in seven (7) potable wells located in a residential neighborhood. Based on the results of the seven (7) potable well samples provided by the Attorney, as well as Private Well Testing Act (PWTA) data from the area, the ICU determined that a potable well receptor evaluation was necessary and began planning a sampling event.
8. What has NJDEP done so far, & what are next steps?
  - a. A potable well receptor investigation has been initiated. All owners of potable wells within an established radius of the point of investigation are contacted to obtain access to conduct sampling of their potable wells. When additional impacted potable wells are identified through this sampling process, BEMSA-ICU again conducts the same process by "stepping out" an additional distance from the contaminated potable wells identified in the previous investigation. This continues until the program has determined the extent of contamination which is based on BEMSA-ICU obtaining samples that have non-detectable concentrations or are below the standards for the contaminant(s) of concern.
  - b. While the NJDEP will perform private well sampling in this area, the quickest way for a well owner to determine if their well is contaminated is for individual well owners to have their well sampled by an [approved laboratory](#) and file a Spill Fund Damage claim to potentially have a POET system installed.
  - c. An Unknown Source Investigation has been initiated. A records search will be conducted to determine if any potential sources of PFAS are in the area. If potential sources are identified, soil and groundwater sampling will be conducted to determine if discharges of PFAS containing materials have occurred. Where discharges of PFAS are identified, the property owner will be

required to remediate. If the property owner is unable to conduct the remediation, the property may be remediated using State funding.

### **Environmental Claims Administration (ECA) Spill Fund Questions:**

9. If you have to get a filtering system, is this covered under the spill fund and what is the process.
  - a. Once PFAS contamination has been confirmed to be in a private well, the owner has one (1) year to file a Spill Fund Damage Claim. The property owner will be required to complete and submit the Spill Fund Damage Claim form and submit with the initial sampling results, and if applicable (confirmation result), proof of property ownership, and three competitive bids to install, maintain, and monitor a (GAC) POET.
  - b. Once a Spill Fund claim is received, the Environmental Claims Administration (ECA) reviews the claim to determine eligibility. If a claim is found eligible, the ECA issues an Offer to Pay notification that outlines what costs are eligible for compensation from the Spill Fund.
  - c. For claims that are submitted to address well/drinking water with PFAS contamination, the following would be covered once your claim is found eligible:
    - i. Cost of initial sample, providing full lab data deliverables are submitted
    - ii. Cost of confirmation sample
    - iii. Installation (must keep your receipts), cost of GAC POET
    - iv. (POET) installation, sampling to ensure water is safe to drink, and POET is functioning properly
    - v. Annual Raw (untreated before GAC treatment system) water sample analyzed for PFAS.
    - vi. Semi-annual treated water samples (collected from spigot between the GAC treatment tanks) analyzed for PFAS.
    - vii. Maintenance as needed
10. Why do you have to get three (3) different tests once you test above standard for PFAS?
  - a. Three (3) tests are not required.
  - b. The ECA requires laboratory testing confirmation when private well testing is performed. A property owner can obtain laboratory confirmation in two ways:
    - i. If only one sample is collected, the private well owner and laboratory must submit the full laboratory data deliverables in electronic format with the Spill Fund Claim Form. This method of confirmation sampling will result in longer Spill Fund Damage claim processing time, as the results need to be reviewed by Contaminated Site Remediation and Redevelopment's (CSRR) Office of Data Quality (ODQ). However, the private well owner will be reimbursed in full for the cost of this sample. Alternatively, the private well owner can request that the laboratory collect an initial and confirmation PFAS sample. This method of confirmation sampling does not require the submission of the full laboratory deliverables and will result in faster claim processing. However, the private well owner will only be reimbursed for the cost of the confirmation sample.
11. Will NJDEP provide clean water to residents? If so, when?
  - a. Once a private well has confirmed PFAS contamination, the property owner may file a Spill Fund Damage claim and obtain three competitive bids to install, maintain, and monitor a (GAC). The installation of a POET is the easiest and quickest remedy to address the PFAS contamination in private wells. Once BEMSA has determined the extent of contamination, a Remedial Alternatives Analysis (RAA) will be conducted to determine the best long-term solution to the problem.

12. How is PFAS removed from drinking water?
  - a. NJDEP requires a POET that is installed directly before water enters the house's plumbing, typically after it exits a pressure tank. The system consists of a pre-treatment filter to remove solid particles, and two tanks containing granular activated carbon (GAC) which remove regulated PFAS chemicals from the water.
  - b. Raw or untreated water enters the pre-treatment sediment filter which removes small solid particles and protects the POET system. The water then enters the first tank where it encounters granular activated carbon (GAC) which is a media that removes PFAS from water. The PFAS contaminants stick to the GAC and the cleaned water proceeds through to tank 2. Tank 2 is a backup tank that is also filled with GAC. From there the clean water can be circulated through the entire house.
13. Several folks are just below the NJDEP standard for PFAS contamination (GWQS) but are above the USEPA standard (MCL). Would these people qualify for NJ Spill Fund to help with remediation?
  - a. Residents whose wells are sampled and show PFAS contamination above the USEPA MCL, but below the NJDEP GWQS, are eligible to apply to Spill Fund.

### **Miscellaneous Questions:**

14. What are the health effects and what if you experience health issues related to high levels of exposure? What specific health issues/concerns should our doctors be monitoring since we have been drinking/ cooking with/ bathing in PFAS contaminated water for 20 years?
  - a. For health-related questions, or help facilitating discussions with health-care professionals, contact the Department of Health (DOH) at (609) 826-4984.
  - b. Please see the resources at the end of this document for more information regarding health concerns.
15. Has there been any discussion concerning the effect this contamination, and subsequent filtration system, has or will have on property values? Will agreements and cost reimbursements transfer to new homeowners when the house is sold?
  - a. We (the NJDEP) cannot address the possible property values for a given home. There are many factors that may influence the sale of a home, and this is beyond the NJDEP's ability to answer.
  - b. Agreements and cost reimbursements end when the house is sold and do not transfer to the new homeowner as they purchased the property with full knowledge of the drinking water issue.
16. How do you help people who cannot afford all the testing that is needed?
  - a. If a resident is within the established radius of the point of investigation, they will be contacted to obtain access to conduct sampling of their potable well using NJDEP funds.
  - b. While some homeowners may eventually be contacted by BEMSA-ICU to have their well sampled as part of the ongoing receptor investigation, there is no guarantee that step-out sampling will reach a resident's home or that they will be tested within a certain time frame.
  - c. The ECA requires laboratory testing confirmation when private well testing is performed.
    - i. If only one sample is collected, the private well owner and laboratory must submit the full laboratory data deliverables in electronic format with the Spill Fund Claim Form. However, the private well owner will be reimbursed in full for the cost of this sample.
17. There is a language barrier as many residents don't speak English. How do we make sure the Spanish speaking population is protected and informed?
  - a. NJDEP letters and documents are available in Spanish and English. NJDEP can accommodate non-English speaking well owners with questions/comments/concerns by having them contact staff who speak Spanish or other languages.

18. How can residents stay informed?
  - a. The ICU works closely with the Office of Community Relations (OCR) who are a resource for the community to contact by phone or email to answer questions/comments/concerns relating to this investigation. The ICU is also committed to keeping Township Officials up to date regarding the latest actions being taken to sample potable wells for PFAS, as well as any source investigation information.
19. Will there be another meeting?
  - a. Additional meetings can be planned and held if the need arises. For regular updates please contact OCR, contact information can be found under Additional Resources.
20. Where are the official boundaries of the old municipal landfill and do you think it could be a potential source of contamination?
  - a. According to proposed plans provided to NJDEP by the municipality, the boundaries of the former landfill appear to be block 1073, lots 33, and 33.01.
  - b. Landfills could be a source of PFAS (see question 1).
21. Will the land that they want to develop at the Old High School location be tested for PFAS and any other contaminants? If contamination is found, how will it be remediated?
  - a. Soil and groundwater may be tested at the property by NJDEP if it is found that PFAS chemicals were used at the Old High School. Generally, if contamination is found, responsible parties are identified and required to retain a LSRP to complete remediation. If the responsible party(ies) are unable or unwilling to complete remediation, the site may be remediated using State funding.
22. What recourse do renters have if their landlords are not installing a filtration system? How are they protected?
  - a. Per N.J.A.C. 5:28-1.3(a) - "Every dwelling unit and lodging house shall be provided with a safe supply of potable water meeting the standards as set forth in the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act regulations (N.J.A.C. 7:10-1 et seq.) published by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection."
  - b. The Spill Fund will pay for a system if potable water is contaminated with PFAS above standard.
  - c. For help facilitating discussions please contact DOH at (609) 826-4984.
23. Will there be a Spill Act Directive issued?
  - a. If a source of contamination is discovered, the property owner will be required to retain a LSRP who will oversee remediation of the contaminated site. If enforcement actions are necessary, a Directive may be issued at that time in order for remediation to be performed.
24. What about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – National drinking water Standard to protect 100 million people from PFAS? It was passed 4/10/24 by Biden/Harris. \$1 Billion available funding? (EPA.gov)
  - a. This law is for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, not for private well owners.
  - b. The New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund will compensate eligible claimants for the costs of the installation of POET systems at impacted private wells. The Spill Fund, when determining the eligibility of a claim, will review PFAS well sample results against the EPA's PFAS Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL).

## **Additional Resources:**

NJDEP PFAS Information Website: <https://dep.nj.gov/pfas/>

NJDEP PFAS in Drinking Water: <https://dep.nj.gov/pfas/drinking-water/>

NJ Department of Health PFAS Information Sheet:

[https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas\\_drinking%20water.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf)

USEPA PFAS Website: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>

USEPA Reducing PFAS in Drinking Water: <https://www.epa.gov/sciencematters/reducing-pfas-drinking-water-treatment-technologies>

Centers For Disease Control PFAS Factsheet: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>

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