



For Immediate Release
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**Delaware Riverkeeper Network Petitions Pennsylvania for Safe Drinking Water Standard
*PFOA requires immediate regulation to protect public health and the environment***

Harrisburg, PA – Delaware Riverkeeper Network submitted a Petition requesting that the Environmental Hearing Board and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection set a statewide maximum contaminant level (MCL) for Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA). Based on the highest value scientific research and the most recent findings of water quality experts, Delaware Riverkeeper Network requested Pennsylvania take immediate action to establish a MCL between 1 and 6 ppt as the mandatory standard that cannot be exceeded in drinking water throughout the entire Commonwealth. PFOA, a highly toxic perfluorinated compound (PFC), is not currently regulated at the federal or state level but is widely distributed in the environment.

PFOA is linked to several diseases and adverse health impacts including cancer, is persistent in the environment and builds up in people's blood when ingested even in small amounts, and has been found in several locations in Pennsylvania. Water system sampling from 2013 to 2015 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency revealed the presence of PFOA and other PFCs in drinking water across the nation, setting off alarm bells where concentrations were high. Levels of PFOA and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) - another toxic PFC - found in public wells in Bucks and Montgomery Counties were among the ten highest sampling results in the nation.¹

Sampling done in Warminster, Warrington and Horsham Townships reported that the groundwater that feeds public and private wells for at least 70,000 people was found to be among the worst in the nation, most all in the vicinity of the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base at Willow Grove, the current Horsham Air Guard Station in Horsham and the site of the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster. As a result of the use of firefighting foams at these military facilities in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, people have been exposed for many years

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/ucmr-3-occurrence-data.zip>

to dangerous concentrations of PFOA in their drinking water. PFOA has also been found in other locations in Pennsylvania and, with expanded water testing, is likely to be found in many more.

“Immediate action must be taken by Pennsylvania to set a drinking water standard that will mandate the removal of PFOA from every water system where it is found. The EPA health advisory level does not provide the protection people need because it allows PFOA to remain in the water at dangerous concentrations. The military and PADEP are using the EPA’s level as a trigger for action, which means that people are still being exposed through their drinking water to an elevated risk of developing a disease linked to this toxic compound. Delaware Riverkeeper Network has filed this petition to spur PADEP to address this water crisis to protect public health, as required by the Pennsylvania Safe Drinking Water Act and our Constitution’s Environmental Rights Amendment,” said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

Response to the discovery of PFOA in drinking water has been uneven and lacks comprehensive policy. As outlined in the Petition, some municipalities want all traces of PFOA removed from their water and are funding systems or buying new water sources to meet that goal, some are relying on the military to replace contaminated wells and install filtration systems to reduce PFOA to the EPA health advisory level (HAL), some individual well owners are shouldering the cost of installing treatment themselves, and many people in the Commonwealth don’t even know if they are drinking contaminated water because their water systems are not being tested for PFCs. This scattered approach is not fair and not an acceptable solution. Adoption of a MCL for PFOA will require regular sampling for PFOA in Pennsylvania water systems, removal of the toxic compound, uniformly consistent protection policies, and will help to locate the pollution so it can be cleaned up.

For a copy of the Petition to the Environmental Quality Board and attachments, filed May 8, 2017: <http://bit.ly/2psG1uu>

Background:

The scientific literature and the data gleaned from health studies show that perfluorinated compounds (PFC) are linked to serious disease, including cancers, and detrimental human health conditions.² Fetuses, infants, and children are the most vulnerable populations due to negative developmental impacts, which also affects pregnant women, women of child bearing age and women who are breastfeeding. Chief among the new bodies of data and findings available for PFOA are those from the court-ordered C8 Health Panel and the C8 Health Project in West Virginia, related to the Dupont facility there. Among the conclusions of this multi-year study of human subjects, their blood and scientific reports, it was found that PFOA is correlated with Kidney Cancer, Testicular Cancer, Thyroid Disease, High Cholesterol, Pregnancy-Induced Hypertension/Preeclampsia, and Ulcerative Colitis.³ In other published studies, probable links

² <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/ucmr-3-occurrence-data.zip>

³ <http://www.c8sciencepanel.org/newsletter10.html>

were found to decreased birth weight and decreased response to vaccines. A report reviewing all of the studies on low birth weight concluded that PFOA does reduce human birth weight.⁴

While the federal Environmental Protection Agency has set a health advisory level for PFOA, they have not set a mandatory federal drinking water standard. The EPA's health advisory level for PFOA and PFOS is 70 ppt when found singly or a combined total of 70 ppt when both are found. Delaware Riverkeeper Network does not consider EPA's HAL to be sufficiently protective of human health, considering the most up to date scientific literature and expert reports.

The New Jersey Drinking Water Quality Institute (NJDWQI) has recommended a MCL of 14 ppt, citing the known health effects of PFOA, its biological persistence and bioaccumulation in humans from drinking water, the conclusion that it is "likely carcinogenic" by EPA's Science Advisory Board, "possibly carcinogenic" by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and as "suggestive evidence of carcinogenic potential" by EPA's Office of Water, as well as several non-carcinogenic adverse health effects. After more than a year of research and analysis, the NJDWQI submitted its recommendation in March 2017 to NJ Department of Environmental Protection, where it is now waiting for rulemaking action⁵.

Expert review by Cambridge Environmental Consulting (CEC), consultants engaged by Delaware Riverkeeper Network, concluded that NJDWQI's recommended MCL of 14 ppt for PFOA is not adequately protective of all population segments.⁶ Instead, CEC has recommended that the proposed MCL for PFOA should be lowered to 1 ppt, or alternatively, should be no higher than 6 ppt.⁷

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⁴ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4181929/pdf/ehp.1307893.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/pfoa-recommend.pdf>

⁶ Oliaei, F.Z., & Kriens, D.L. (2016). Proposed Health-Based Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) in Drinking Water. Technical Analyses of New Jersey Drinking Water Quality Institute, Cambridge Environmental Consulting, November 18, 2016. Retrieved from

<http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org/sites/default/files/cvr%20ltr%20PFOA%20mcl%20cmnt11.19.combinedpdf.pdf>

⁷ Id. at 3.