



**Written Testimony
PA PFAS Action Team
Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
April 29, 2019
Re: PADEP PFAS Sampling Plan Phase 1 announced April 12, 2019**

Delaware Riverkeeper Network considers the PA Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) PFAS sampling plan to be a critically important first step towards state regulation of PFAS, for which we have all been waiting far too long. Regarding the PFAS sampling plan, we have specific concerns. This comment supplements the verbal testimony we submitted on April 15, 2019.

First, the plan applies only to Public Water Systems, leaving out private water wells, leaving a large number of Pennsylvanians out of the sampling. About 3.5 million people get their water from private wells and an unknown additional number use springs or other types of water sources that are not connected to public systems. Penn State Extension reports that about 20,000 new water wells are drilled each year. Excluding private well users from the plan means that about one quarter of the population of Pennsylvania will continue to be in the dark about whether they are drinking water containing PFAS. This is a huge oversight and is simply not just, especially considering that there are many private wells where sources of contamination could be located. For instance, many oil and gas wells – which are stated in DEP's plan as having used PFAS in proprietary fracking formulas, are located in rural areas where individual water wells are the main supply. And we learned from the PFAS Pilot Health Study ("PEATT Study") here in Bucks and Montgomery Counties that people with private wells had higher levels of PFAS in their blood. In addition, due to lack of statewide private water well construction regulations, there is no comprehensive database or map of all private water sources, so there is no way to know if private water sources are in harm's way; it cannot be assumed there is minimal exposure of private water users to PFAS. The plan should be amended to include private water sources.

Secondly, the plan is labeled as "Phase 1" and is dated 2019-2020. Will there be a Phase 2 and how long will that take? Why is Phase 1 being stretched out throughout 2019 and 2020? The troublesome lack of urgency that has been displayed by the Commonwealth and by the federal Environmental Protection Agency seems to continue to control the timing of accomplishing what should be the main goal. The goal, according to Secretary McDonald, is to adopt a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFAS that will finally require their removal from our drinking water. The plan should be revised to complete all sampling as swiftly as possible, less than a year. Most

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states that are adopting regulations for PFAS spend a year after all sampling is complete to write regulations, then another year after the rulemaking to review and revise based on public input. At this pace, it could be three years or more before people finally get the protection needed – the removal of PFAS from drinking water sources and the cleanup of the contamination from the environment at the expense of the responsible parties. DRN submitted our petition to the PA Environmental Quality Board two years ago for an MCL to be set for PFOA and it was accepted unanimously by the Board in August 2017. We actually could be at the point of adopting that MCL today if action had started then – enough time has been wasted! All action should be on urgent footing, recognizing that we are facing nothing less than a water crisis here.

Thirdly, we are very troubled by what sources of contamination are not included in the plan although these potential sources are acknowledged by PADEP. Municipal and industrial stormwater and wastewater treatment plants are both known to carry PFAS compounds into the environment. At the military bases here in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, for instance, a large volume of stormwater with high concentrations of these contaminants is uncontrollably released into the creeks below the bases, making their way to the Neshaminy Creek and downstream water intakes. Sludge and biosolids made from sewage sludge are identified by scientific reports as significant pathways of contamination because the PFAS do not break down in the sludge that is then applied on farm fields and other open lands, sometimes far away from the original source. The sampling plan should be revised to cover more locations because these highly toxic compounds remain indefinitely in the environment and move into drinking water sources from a wide variety of environmental media such as air, surface water, effluents, sediments, sludges, and dust. A more robust plan should be funded and executed now.

Finally, we urge that more information about and the results from the sampling plan be made public, such as the exact locations of sampling, the detection limits that will be used, and the reporting levels that will be reported.

Additional questions to which the public should have answers include:

- Why is PADEP only testing for PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFBS? Using EPA Method 537.1, issued in November 2018, 18 PFAS can be sampled for.
- Will DEP gather and keep the sampling data? Will the data be made public and if so, when and how?
- Why would that data not be included in the Phase 1 report?

Additionally, we strongly reject the statement in the plan that “...there remains a lack of knowledge regarding these chemicals, how they impact the human body and what lasting, long-term health effects may be realized as a result of exposure.” PFOA and PFOS, the most frequently found perfluorinated compounds in Pennsylvania so far, have a wealth of information that has been developed regarding the correlation to certain adverse health effects. States across the nation are using the body of data that has been developed by the C8 Panel - which studied human exposure to PFOA and found it was linked to 6 major diseases, including testicular cancer and kidney

cancer – and the numerous scientific and health studies that have verified the effects of PFAS on the human body, especially the fetus and young children to inform the process of setting statewide mandatory safe drinking water standards or MCLs and other important regulatory actions they are taking. See New Jersey’s current rulemaking: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/notices.html>. To state at this point that there is “very little known” sounds like subterfuge or denial, and discredits DEP and the efforts of the PFAS Action Team.

We advocate that the PFAS Team revise the sampling plan, conduct the sampling expeditiously, and involve the PA EQB in its efforts so that we will be protected sooner rather than later by a statewide MCL from the adverse health effects of PFAS.

We needed MCLs for PFOA and PFOS yesterday, not tomorrow, and this urgent need should be driving PADEP’s process. There already is enough sampling data available from the three bases in Bucks and Montgomery County and other locations that have been tested by EPA and PADEP, on going and over the past several years, to warrant the setting of an MCL today due to the approximately 100,000 people who are known to have been exposed through their drinking water. That is already an unacceptable risk for an unsuspecting public. Sampling is important to identify the full breadth of the contamination but can be done concurrently with the rulemaking process that will expeditiously set mandatory MCLs for these highly toxic PFAS compounds to protect people from adverse health effects and to require cleanup by the responsible parties.