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Public Demands Government Action on PFAS *Groups and Residents Speak Out at US EPA "Listening Session"*

Horsham, PA – People from across the region attended and testified at a meeting and "Listening Session" hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today to call for action by government agencies to address the PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances - PFAS) drinking water crisis.

"Delaware Riverkeeper Network calls on EPA and PADEP to respond to the urgent need for regulatory controls of the highly toxic PFAS compounds that have fouled our environment. This is why we petitioned the PA Environmental Quality Board to set a MCL for PFOA last year – but they have not yet responded. It is wholly unjust that people have been and are still being exposed to contaminated drinking water, air, and food without even knowing it, risking their and their family's health and future. As agencies sworn to protect people's health and the environment, the lack of action to mandate complete removal of these toxic compounds and cleanup of their sources is intolerable. We want safe drinking water and we want it now," said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

"The residents of Warminster have serious concerns about health issues and if their water is safe to drink. The EPA must act immediately to adjust the Health Advisory Levels for PFOA and PFOS that effectively communicate and explain health risks to the public," said Donna Elms, Warminster Township Environmental Advisory Committee member.

"We hope the EPA sees the magnitude of the problem in our area and steps up to the plate to finally put enforceable drinking water standards in place at levels protective enough for our children and other vulnerable populations. The community deserves a seat at the table when it comes to making important decisions that impact us regarding PFAS contamination. Nothing

about us, without us,” said Hope Grosse, Joanne Stanton, and Mark Cuker of the Community Presentation Panel that spoke at today’s “Community Engagement” forum.

“It’s time for the EPA and the state to get serious and end PFAS usage and clean up drinking water contamination. The military must pay for effective and lasting water treatment. Failure to act by the state *and* federal government is a grave environmental injustice,” said Joanne Kilgour, Director of Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter.

“EPA must take action federally to protect all people but the states simply can’t wait around for EPA to adopt mandatory standards. Pennsylvanians have a Constitutional Right to clean water under Article 1, Section 27, the Environmental Rights Amendment. Pennsylvania must step up now to adopt Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFCs to protect public health and the environment,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

More than 70,000 people have had their water contaminated in the region around three military bases in Bucks and Montgomery Counties and in some other locations in Bucks County. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) have contaminated water in the vicinity of the former Naval Air Station at Willow Grove, the Horsham Air Guard Station and the Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster; according to EPA data, the military bases are responsible for some of the worst contamination by PFOA and PFOS in the nation.

These highly toxic compounds, released by the military in fire-fighting foam and by manufacturers and other industrial and consumer product applications, have contaminated groundwater, surface water and soils throughout the region. PFAS do not break down in the environment, lasting indefinitely, and build up in human blood, posing health threats years after exposure has ceased. Many residents may have been exposed to elevated levels for decades, risking the development of diseases linked to PFOA and PFOS, including Kidney Cancer, Testicular Cancer, Thyroid Disease, High Cholesterol, Pregnancy-Induced Hypertension/Preeclampsia, and Ulcerative Colitis. Even very low concentrations of the chemical compounds in drinking water pose danger, especially for the fetus, infants and young children.

Although the municipalities near the bases have taken measures to eliminate or reduce the compounds in drinking water, the military is using the EPA’s Health Advisory Level (HAL) as the threshold for action and is not covering all costs. Community concerns include: the inadequacy of EPA’s HAL of 70ppt for PFOA and PFOS in preventing adverse health effects; costs being borne by water users; health effects and lack of comprehensive medical monitoring; lack of coordinated and thorough sampling and public review of air, water, and soils; how the pollution will be cleaned up from the environment; questions about methods of testing, and water treatment; what are being used as replacement chemicals and lack of enough testing and research; lack of transparency on the part of the Department of Defense and EPA; and the need for protective mandatory safe drinking water standards to be set by government.

Because EPA has not issued a federal maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFOA and PFOS and is not expected to do so in the foreseeable future (in the 19 year history of the EPA’s Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, they have never set a mandatory MCL, only HALs),

community residents are advocating for PADEP to establish MCLs to provide critically needed protection statewide.

EPA's HAL has come under heavy criticism and has spurred some states to take protective action, including establishing their own MCLs. New Jersey is in the process of adopting MCLs for PFOA, PFOS, and PFNA that are many times lower than EPA's HAL; Vermont, Minnesota, California, and other states have issued advisories or standards, going beyond EPA's HAL. New Jersey issued new fish consumption advisories last week due to the presence of dangerous concentrations of perfluorinated compounds in fish samples collected across the state over recent years, showing that these toxins are both prevalent and persistent and that they accumulate in fish. Fish consumption is another major means of ingesting the compounds for some populations.

A seminal report issued last month by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), initially suppressed by EPA due to fears stated by agency staff over a "public relations nightmare", issued "minimum risk levels" for 14 PFAS chemicals. The level recommended for PFOS is about 10 times lower than EPA's HAL and for PFOA, the level is 7 times lower, supported by current science and health-based values.

EPA has also been criticized for its attempts to minimize the dangers of PFAS in drinking water. It is known that drinking water is the major source of ingestion of PFAS. Most everybody has some level of PFAS in their blood but those who drink PFAS-contaminated water have more negative health effects yet EPA doesn't use more sensitive toxicological effects as the basis for their HAL and has consistently pointed to other sources of PFAS such as consumer products as the major problem. While Teflon, Stainmaster, and other coatings and plastics are substantial sources of widespread pollution, it is the added concentrations in drinking water that greatly elevates the concentration in the body. This demands action by government to remove these compounds from water and to stop the pollution from spreading by requiring those responsible for the pollution to clean it up.

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