

# Update on Water Contamination

Firefighting foams used at the former Horsham Air Base spanning several decades containing PFO, PFOA and other PCF chemicals have contaminated public and private water wells in Warrington. Rep. Watson is personally invested in holding the military accountable for the containment and the proper remediation of the ground water flowing into our public water ways, not only as a Pennsylvania state legislator for the 144th District, but as a resident of Warrington who has been drinking the water for the past 39 years.

In 2017, after years of negotiating with the military, a cooperative agreement with Warrington Township was finalized, providing funds to install Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filtration systems on those public wells that measure above 70 ppt (parts per trillion), the current Health Advisory Level (HAL) recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is important to recognize that Warrington still has four of its nine wells offline without filtration systems because the military will only fund wells that register above 70 ppt of contamination. They will remain offline until the EPA lowers the HAL level, which then would require the military to pay for filtration, or until gap funding can be identified. Rep. Watson is currently pursuing gap-funding sources.

Currently, Warrington is not using any of its wells to supply water to residents. Wells will only be used for backup once they are operating on GAC filtration systems and have time proven test results of non-detect levels. To achieve that non-detect goal, Warrington Water Department contracted with North Wales Water Authority in 2017 to deliver 100 percent non-detect water from Forest Park to residents under a 10-year contract. Although expenses have been mounting, Warrington Township was able to prevent additional costs to customers for the supply of non-detect water through the end of 2017. However, with the transition to 100 percent non-detect water, the township was forced to increase customer water rates to \$5.17 per thousand gallons in January 2018. This increase covers the cost to deliver non-detect water to residents, due to the lack of military funding.

In July 2018, Rep. Watson made a plea to the EPA during its Community Engagement Meeting in Horsham to request the military to pay for **ALL** the required remediation and the cost to import **non-detect** water to our residents. This is a nationwide problem caused by the military's use of this hazardous foam; therefore, states and taxpayers should not pay for this disaster. And for those residents drinking the contaminated water, it is important to consume non-detect water to purge the accumulated contaminant from their bodies as it can potentially result in catastrophic medical conditions. *(Continued on next page.)*

## ATSDR Released the PFO/PFOA National Health Profile on June 20, 2018

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) released a draft toxicological profile for Perfluoroalkyl Substances, which are ingredients used in the production of non-stick materials like Scotchguard, Teflon and firefighting foam. The risk to human health is "unknown," but exposure has been linked to various types of cancer, developmental issues and preeclampsia in laboratory animals. This toxicological profile includes provisional Minimal Risk Levels for both PFOA and PFOS. A Minimal Risk Level (MRL) is a non-enforceable standard, similar to an EPA health advisory level. The ATSDR recommended reducing EPA's non-enforceable health advisory from 70 parts per trillion (ppt) to 11 ppt for PFOA and 7 ppt for PFOS for drinking water. For more information on this national health study, contact the **Local ATSDR office and ask for Lora Werner 215-814-3141 or email [lkw9@cdc.gov](mailto:lkw9@cdc.gov)**.

**You can view the draft toxicological profile at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp200.pdf](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp200.pdf).**

## Blood Testing Pilot Study

In February 2018 the PA Department of Health (DOH) received a grant from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to pilot a blood collection program to test resident exposure to PFO/PFOA in impacted areas of Bucks and Montgomery counties. Pilot study participants will be provided with their test results and a comparison to the national average. Final results will be provided to the ATSDR this fall. The study will lay the scientific groundwork, protocol and baseline for the ATSDR upcoming national study on the health impacts of PFAS. Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick amended funding for the upcoming national study into law through the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). He is advocating to include residents in our community in the study. An announcement is expected later this year.

For questions on the DOH pilot study or to receive copies of a PFA Clinical Fact Sheet, contact Sharon Watkins at the PA DOH at 717-787-3350 or email [shawatkins@pa.gov](mailto:shawatkins@pa.gov).



Like many residents in the district experiencing unexplained medical conditions, Rep. Watson was diagnosed with thyroid cancer with no family history. She is left wondering if this is related to PFO and PFOA exposure. This type of cancer is one of the many medical side effects as identified by the recent report released by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Many have asked what their health ramifications will be, and honestly there doesn't seem to be a definitive answer at this point. However, Rep. Watson feels everyone is entitled to answers and she expressed this opinion to the EPA during the Horsham meeting, requesting the EPA to seriously consider the ATSDR recommendation to lower the Health Advisory Level to 7 which is 10 times lower than the current HAL level. She emphasized that compounds bioaccumulate in the body. According to the ATSDR report, once the contamination source is removed, PFOA compounds have an estimated half-life of eight years and PFOs have an estimated half-life of 5.4 years, allowing the body to slowly recover.

To educate residents about their health risks, the ATSDR created a guide for clinicians regarding concerns of PFC exposure as part of the C8 Health Project. This project was established in 2002 to perform a large epidemiological study near Parkersburg, West Virginia. This was the site of an industrial release of PFOAs discharged into the Ohio River affecting the surrounding ground water from 1950 to 2002. The C8 Science Panel analyzed health data and found probable links between elevated PFOA blood levels and high cholesterol (hypercholesteremia), ulcerative colitis, thyroid function, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, preeclampsia, as well as elevated blood pressure during pregnancy. Due to these findings, the C8 Medical Panel suggests health screening for those exposed to the chemical to evaluate for these conditions. These tests are well established in clinical medicine and may be a consideration to discuss with your doctor.

To reduce human exposure to these hazardous compounds, Rep. Watson put forth legislation last year to amend the state's Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act to include PFO and PFOA and other PFC compounds. This legislation is currently being considered in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. Additionally, she is advocating for blood testing and biomonitoring. Residents deserve to know how this is impacting their health, as well as the health of servicemen, servicewomen and employees who worked at the base.

Rep. Watson wants to make sure the public is aware that this is a real problem and there does not seem to be enough urgency coming from the federal government to mandate that the Air National Guard and the Navy contain and remediate the situation on any specific timeframe. Despite their compulsory efforts to remedy the problem, these two federal agencies have sadly fallen short in protecting our residents from this contamination. Today, there is still contamination running off the base into the Park Creek and the Little Neshaminy at appalling levels. Air National Guard and Navy officials recently announced at the public Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting that they will not be unveiling plans to remediate the contamination until 2019. As mentioned, these meetings are open to the public and Rep. Watson encourages residents to attend. The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 12 at 2 p.m. at the Horsham Library (see information box).

As Rep. Watson leaves office, she encourages residents to stay vigilant, continue to advocate, attend the public RAB meetings and to continue to put pressure on the military to do the right thing. In the meantime, if you live in Warrington and are on a private well or have any questions or concerns, contact the Air National Guard. See contact information box at the right. You will find this information and much more on [www.kathywatson144.com](http://www.kathywatson144.com).

### Well Testing, Public Meeting Announcement & Contact Information

Amec Foster Wheeler Co. will be providing well sampling and water delivery inquiries for the Air National Guard in Warrington. Contact: David Side at [david.side@amecfcw.com](mailto:david.side@amecfcw.com) or 610-877-6111 for information.

For information on drinking water, contact Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Safe Drinking Water at 484-250-5980 or Clean Water at 484-250-5970.

For questions regarding water/blood testing resources, and environmental cleanup including water and soil remediation, contact the U.S. EPA:

U.S. EPA – Regional Community Involvement Coordinator handling testing inquiries and other community related issues  
Larry A. Brown, 215-814-5527; email: [brown.larry@epa.gov](mailto:brown.larry@epa.gov)

U.S. EPA – Remedial Project Manager handling environmental cleanup of water, soil and plume tracking  
Sarah Kloss, 215-814-3379; email: [kloss.sarah@epa.gov](mailto:kloss.sarah@epa.gov)

**The Horsham Air Guard Station Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) will update the public on PFO/PFOA contamination Dec. 12 at 2 p.m. at the Horsham Library, 435 Babylon Road, Horsham, PA 19044.**

These **public** meetings are held quarterly. The purpose is to discuss community concerns regarding environmental issues including water contamination at the former Willow Grove Airbase in Horsham. **Be sure to confirm the time and date, as the RAB has made last-minute changes in the past with little notification.** If you are unable to attend the meeting due to the daytime schedule, contact the RAB representatives below for more information:

**Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base**  
Willington Lin  
BRAC Environmental Coordinator  
215-897-4904  
[Willie.Lin@navy.mil](mailto:Willie.Lin@navy.mil)

**Air National Guard**  
Keith Freihofer  
Environmental Restoration Program Manager  
3501 Fetchet Ave., Shepperd Hall,  
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