



Office of the Town Manager

## NEWS RELEASE

Subject: **PFOA Water Contamination Public Meeting – Bedford, NH**

Release Date: March 25, 2016

Contact: Rick Sawyer, Acting Town Manager (603) 792-1300

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All Bedford residents who are serviced by Pennichuck Water in the areas of Greenfield Farms, Cabot Preserve, Parker Ridge, Brick Mill, and Jenkins Road are encouraged to attend a **Public Information Meeting on Wednesday, March 30, 2016 at 6:30 PM at the Peter Woodbury Elementary School, starting at 6:30 PM** with NH Department of Environmental Services, NH Department of Health and Human Services, Pennichuck Water, and Town of Bedford officials regarding the recent discovery of Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) in water supplied to Pennichuck from the Merrimack Village Water District. This issue does not affect residents in other part of Bedford that are serviced by Pennichuck or Manchester Water Works.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not set an enforceable drinking water standard for PFOA under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. EPA's Office of Water has, however, established a Provisional Health Advisory (PHA) of 0.4 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) or 400 parts per trillion for PFOA. That level is set based upon short-term contact and the EPA is currently developing guidance for long-term exposure levels, which EPA is expected to release in the near future. Since EPA has not yet established a Health Advisory for lifetime exposure to PFOA, NHDES, out of an abundance of caution, has decided to provide bottle drinking water to locations using a private well for drinking water for human consumption that contains over 100 parts per trillion of PFOA. NHDES will reassess this situation once EPA provides more definitive guidance.

Test results from the Merrimack Village Water District ranged from 17 to 90 parts per trillion which are below the PHA of 400 parts per trillion and the level at which NHDES determined it would be appropriate to initially provide bottled water. Based on this first round of testing, NHDES has initiated additional testing of drinking water wells. The testing completed by Pennichuck in Bedford found a level of 36 parts per trillion.

PFOA, a perfluorochemical (PFC), is part of a family of manmade chemicals that were used for decades as ingredients to make products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water, such as non-stick cookware, weather resistant outdoor clothing and gear, and stain resistant carpeting. Many chemicals in this group, including PFOA, are commonly present in the environment and do not break down easily.

Studies have shown that nearly all people have some level of PFCs in their blood. Potential health effects from exposure to low levels of PFCs are not well understood. To date studies have not provided consistent answers as to whether PFCs can affect growth and development, hormone levels including thyroid hormone, liver enzyme levels, cholesterol levels, immune function or occurrence of certain types of cancer.

Additional Resources: [http://www.bedfordnh.org/pages/BedfordNH\\_Manager/Water](http://www.bedfordnh.org/pages/BedfordNH_Manager/Water)  
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pfoa.htm>