



Suffolk County Government

Steve Bellone, County Executive



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Environmental Investigation at the former BOMARC Missile Base

Update 9/2020

Former BOMARC Missile Base Update Old Country Road, Westhampton

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) has completed a report summarizing the results of groundwater and soil sampling conducted in accordance with Suffolk County Legislative Resolution 1065-2018. The report, [Groundwater and Soil Investigation at the BOMARC Facility, Westhampton N.Y.](#), is summarized below.

Background

The BOMARC missile base was operated by the U.S military as one of several BOMARC facilities protecting the east coast from a potential Soviet air attack from 1959 until it was decommissioned in 1964. Fifty-six nuclear-tipped missiles were located at this facility. The missile warheads were fusion-boosted fission nuclear warheads which utilized tritium and required maintenance every 90 days. After decommissioning, the property, which comprises approximately 90 developed acres, was transferred to Suffolk County. The County has since utilized the property for storage of automobiles involved in serious accidents, as a law enforcement shooting range, and a vehicle training course for emergency responders, among other uses.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has notified Suffolk County that the former BOMARC (Boeing Michigan Aeronautical Research Center) Missile Base, located on Old Country Road in Westhampton, is now considered a potential inactive hazardous waste disposal site. If it is determined that any potential hazardous waste disposed on the property poses a significant threat to public health or the environment the property will be listed on the New York State Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites. This is based on the detection of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), as discussed below.

Private Well Survey

The community public water supply in this area currently meets all existing drinking water standards, including the recently adopted MCLs for PFOS, PFOA and 1,4-dioxane. The Suffolk County Water Authority's Old Country Road public water supply wellfield is located immediately south of the former BOMARC property. PFOS had been detected in that wellfield in 2014 at 48 ppt, which is below the health advisory level (HAL) of 70 ppt, established in May, 2016 by the United State Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). That public water supply wellfield has treatment to remove PFOS and is routinely tested on a quarterly basis.

Due to a detection of PFAS in a private well, SCDHS began a [survey and investigation of private wells](#) in Westhampton in 2017. Fifty-one properties were identified in the survey area as potentially relying on private wells. Suffolk County was granted access to collect private well samples at 41 properties. Two of the private wells had detections of PFOS and/or PFOA at levels exceeding the HAL of 70 ppt, and nine additional wells contained PFOS and/or PFOA at levels exceeding the new MCLs of 10 ppt enacted recently by New York State. The NYSDEC has installed water treatment systems and continues to monitor the two homes which had detections above the HAL. Recently, additional residences that may have private wells were identified, bringing the total number of private wells to 62 wells serving 63 properties.

Bottled water is available at no cost to properties on private wells in the survey area unless results indicate there are no detections of PFOS or PFOA in these wells. Residents may call 631-852-4820 to arrange for a delivery.

In coordination with NYSDEC, the SCDHS is performing another round of private well sampling at all properties identified in the survey area. Any property owner within the survey area that is currently using a private well for drinking water should contact the SCDHS at 631-852-5810 to have their water tested, even if it has been tested in the past. For a map of the private well survey area [click here](#)

Environmental Investigations

Pursuant to Resolution 1065-2018 of the Suffolk County Legislature, which required the SCDHS to conduct preliminary soil and groundwater sampling at the BOMARC property, SCDHS installed 28 profile wells. PFAS were detected in 26 of the 28 profile wells. A total of 13 of the 28 profile wells had detections of PFOS and/or PFOA above the recently

adopted New York State drinking water standards of 10 ppt, with combined concentrations of PFOS and PFOA as high as 219 ppt.

In addition, the SCDHS performed a limited site evaluation of subsurface leaching structures (UICs) and surface soils at the BOMARC property, targeting areas of potential concern. Four UIC structures (including an abandoned underground fireworks disposal pit) had concentrations of VOCs, SVOCs and/or metals that exceeded Suffolk County Sanitary Code standards, indicating that remediation will be required. PCBs, for which there are no Suffolk County standards, exceeded the NYSDEC soil clean-up objectives (SCOs) (codified at 6NYCRR Part 375) for Protection of Groundwater in five UICs, three of which had also exceeded Suffolk County standards for other contaminants.

Fourteen surface soil samples were collected as part of the investigation; twelve of which exceeded NYSDEC Unrestricted Use SCOs. Further investigation in these areas may be required. Six of those samples also exceeded the Commercial or Protection of Groundwater SCOs, which are possible future remedial goals based on site use and groundwater status. It is important to note that these surface soil samples were targeted to areas of suspected contamination. Of these six samples exceeding Commercial or Protection of Groundwater SCOs, one was ash from the new fireworks burn box, three were soil from the shooting range, one was stained soil adjacent to an aboveground tank, and one was soil adjacent to a concrete pad suspected of previous hazardous material storage. Elevated concentrations of contaminants in these samples are could be expected.

Four of 10 surface soil samples exceeded the PCB Residential Use SCO. Due to the unusual occurrence of PCBs in surface soil, a second round of PCB surface soil sampling was performed at 67 locations throughout the site, including some of the same locations sampled during the initial round. In this second round of sampling, PCBs were either not detected or found at much lower levels than the first sampling event. Additional investigation will be conducted.

Lead was detected at elevated concentrations in surface soils at the shooting range. Lead is a common contaminant at shooting ranges and is not considered hazardous waste while the range is active. The Suffolk County Police Department takes precautions to limit the exposure to dust from the shooting range and is in the process of evaluating a lead reclamation project at the range.

Suffolk County health officials have consulted with state health officials regarding the PCB levels, current site use, and precautions being taken at the site. No immediate action is indicated at this time. The County has also begun consultation with the New York State Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau for review and further guidance. County officials will inform the community and users of the BOMARC facility if there are any new developments.

Next Steps

- SCDHS, in collaboration with NYSDEC is implementing a groundwater investigation plan to characterize other potential PFAS sources of concern in the area, including a former drag racing strip, the Old Westhampton Landfill, possible foam use related to the Pine Barrens Wildfires of 1995, and local sewage treatment plants.
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- Based on the data from this investigation, four UIC systems will require remediation under Suffolk County SOP 9-95. However, due to PCB contamination in many of these UICs, Suffolk County will work with the NYSDEC in developing appropriate remedial action.
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- Further onsite investigation will be required to characterize the extent of soil contamination.

In an effort to keep the public informed, this website will be updated as new information becomes available.

Contacts for more information

For information about New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Superfund Sites, [click here](#).

For the notice of final adoption of the New York State drinking water standards for PFOS and PFOA [Click here](#)

For information about US EPA Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS in Drinking Water [click here](#).

Residents with general questions about health effects of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are advised to call the New York State Department of Health (800) 458-1158 or (518) 402-7860 (Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.).

Residents who are unsure if they are served by public water may call the Suffolk County Water Authority at 631-698-9500.

Residents with private wells who have questions about private well water in Suffolk County or who wish to have their wells tested may contact the SCDHS Office of Water Resources at 631-852-5810.

Additional Information

[12-19-2019- Press Release Former Westhampton BOMARC Missile Base Being Considered as a Potential New York State Superfund Site.](#)

[12-05-2019- Correspondence to Peter A. Scully](#)