

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 25, 2018

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Water Quality Testing of Private Wells in Area of Old Country Road in Westhampton

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has identified two chemicals known as PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) as emerging contaminants. These chemicals are part of a class of chemicals known as perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which are currently unregulated by the federal government, though the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has classified these chemicals as hazardous substances. PFAS have been used in a number of industrial and commercial products such as firefighting foam, as well as coatings that repel water, oil, stains and grease. Thus, people may be exposed to PFOS and PFOA through air, water, or soil from industrial sources and from consumer products.

Through monitoring conducted under a USEPA program known as the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, PFOS was detected at a low level in a public supply well in the vicinity of Old Country Road in Westhampton. The public drinking water supply in the area has not exceeded the USEPA lifetime health advisory level of 70 ppt.

USEPA's health advisory levels are established to protect even the most sensitive populations, including fetuses during pregnancy and breastfed babies, against adverse health effects. According to the USEPA, studies indicate that exposure to PFOA and PFOS over certain levels may result in adverse health effects, including developmental effects to fetuses during pregnancy or to breastfed infants, cancer, immune effects, and thyroid effects. See USEPA fact sheet on perfluorinated compounds for more information https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/drinkingwaterhealthadvisories_pfoa_pfos_updated_5.31.16.pdf

To assess the drinking water quality of properties served with private wells, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, in consultation with the New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation, initiated a private well survey in the vicinity of Old Country Road in Westhampton in late December 2017. At this time 55 properties have been identified within the survey areas that are potentially served with private wells. PFOS and PFOA have been detected in some of the private wells that have been tested so far. One private well had PFOS and PFOA detected above the USEPA lifetime health advisory level of 70 ppt.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services would like to sample all private wells in this area at no charge to homeowners. The New York State Department of Health Wadsworth Laboratory will expeditiously test collected samples for PFOS and PFOA. If your property is served by a private well, and your residence is located in the area bounded on the east by Beaverdam Creek, on the south by Moriches Bay, on the west by the Speonk River and then extending approximately one mile north of Old Country

Road, please contact the Suffolk County Department of Health Services Office of Water Resources at (631) 852-5810 so that your well can be tested free of charge. See attached map.

As a precaution while the sampling effort is underway, New York State DEC will provide bottled water free of charge to residents in the private well survey area described above. New York State DEC will also provide Point of Entry Treatment (POET) systems to interested property owners with well water detections above the USEPA lifetime health advisory level. If you use a private well for your drinking water and live in the survey area you may call 631-852-4820 to schedule a delivery of bottled water.

Homes connected to a public water supply do not need to have their water tested as these supplies are routinely tested. Currently, the public drinking water supply in the area is below the USEPA lifetime health advisory level of 70 ppt.

Residents with general questions about health effects of PFAS are advised to call the New York State Water Quality Hotline: 1-800-801-8092, Monday - Friday: 8 a.m.- 4 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 Suffolk County Department of Health Services Office of Water Resources at 631-852-5810.

For additional information about PFAS, please visit the Suffolk County Department of Health Services website at: www.suffolkcountyny.gov/health/pfcwaterinfo

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