

Bridgehampton Road Wellfield PFAS Source Investigation

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH) and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) are each working to protect public health and the environment in the East Hampton community. These agencies are investigating potential sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) groundwater contamination, including Perfluoropropionic acid (PFPrA) and trifluoroacetic acid (TFA), that were detected in various water samples collected from the Suffolk County Water Authority (SCWA) Bridgehampton Road Wellfield.

No source of the contamination has been determined by the state at this time. The investigation in East Hampton is designed to identify the source and extent of PFAS detected in drinking water supply wells at the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield. This includes an evaluation at a nearby battery energy storage system (BESS) that caught fire on May 31, 2023. A map of the BESS facility and the wellfield can be found below.

This community update describes the extensive planned investigation by the agencies.

Background

The SCWA recently developed a new analytical method for Ultra Short Chain (USC) PFAS, a class of PFAS compounds not previously monitored by SCWA or any other public water supply in New York State. SCWA began using this new method in January 2026 to analyze drinking water samples collected across their public water supply. The reason USC PFAS have not been monitored is because they are not listed as hazardous substances or emerging contaminants by New York State, other states, or the federal government, and commercial laboratories have only recently developed protocols to test for USC PFAS. While the analysis of USC PFAS in water is currently only available through a very small number of laboratories, none of the methods used for this analysis have been certified by the federal or state governments at this time.

Perfluoropropionic acid (PFPrA) and trifluoroacetic acid (TFA), both USC PFAS compounds, were detected in various water samples collected from public supply wells at the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield. PFPrA was detected in four of the Bridgehampton Road supply wells. While initial tests in early 2026 showed lower levels of PFPrA, more recent tests showed higher levels. SCWA removed two public water wells from service with values that exceeded 50 parts per billion (ppb), and reduced the use of the two remaining impacted wells with significantly lower levels of PFPrA, to the extent practical. For context, 50 ppb is the maximum contaminant level (MCL) established for unspecified organic contaminants (UOC) in New York State. The UOC standard is a value that DOH uses to assess contamination from compounds for which a specific regulatory standard is not defined.

As part of Suffolk County's investigation, SCDHS installed temporary wells between the public supply wells and the battery energy storage system to the north of the public supply as shown in the attached map. Water samples from these wells have provided information on groundwater contamination in the area. Concentrations of 1,170 ppb of PFPrA and 2.77 ppb of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) are among the sample results obtained from the profile wells.

Health Updates

Development of Site-Specific Screening Value for PFPrA

DOH developed a site-specific screening value of 3 ppb for PFPrA based on a review of available scientific literature. This site-specific screening value will be used to guide decisions regarding public and private water supplies. PFPrA is a less toxic PFAS compared to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and PFOS, likely due to structural differences between the compounds; PFPrA is a relatively smaller molecule and has a relatively shorter half-life in the human body.

Private Well Sampling

SCDHS identified 26 homes in the area that are not connected to public water and offered private well sampling to the owners. To date, ten property owners requested sampling and nine were sampled. When data is available and individual owners are notified, DEC summarizes those results in a publicly available report. Initial testing results reviewed thus far have found no PFPrA above the site-specific screening value. DEC will work with DOH and SCDHS to evaluate results and, where appropriate, will provide the opportunity for alternate water supplies to impacted private well owners.

Scope of Investigation

Following USC PFAS discovery, DEC, DOH, SCDHS, and a DEC engineering contractor developed a work plan to comprehensively investigate contamination and to determine the source and extent of the PFAS contamination to ensure protection of public health. As described in more detail below, the investigation consists of collecting soil and groundwater samples for PFAS laboratory analysis and characterizing the direction and speed of groundwater flow from suspected sources. The investigation work plan is available at the link below.

<https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/2601953/>

Soil and groundwater sampling

DEC, in coordination with SCDHS, plans to sample for PFPrA and 40 other PFAS compounds in seven pre-existing wells and 14 newly installed wells as part of this investigation. Seven pre-existing monitoring wells are located on the National Grid property to the north of the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield. Additionally, SCDHS recently installed six monitoring wells at multiple depths at other locations which will also be sampled for PFAS by both SCDHS and DEC. DEC is installing eight additional monitoring wells on and near the BESS property. DEC is also collecting soil samples next to the newly installed wells, and test if PFAS are leaching from the soil into the groundwater at suspected release locations.

Groundwater flow direction

Water levels will be measured in the permanent monitoring wells and tests will be performed to understand the groundwater flow directions and groundwater velocity. This data will be combined with groundwater and drinking water sampling results to understand the source for PFAS contamination identified in groundwater samples collected from the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield.

Timeline/Reporting

Investigation activities commenced during the week of July 20, 2026, and will continue through the summer. DEC's data analysis and reporting will proceed into the fall. Final reporting and other site related documents will be made available in the link below.

<https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/2601953/>

Unit Conversions

PFOA and PFOS each have maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) of 10 parts per trillion (ppt)

PFPrA has a site-specific screening value of 3 parts per billion (ppb).

Units can be reported in either ppb or ppt. To convert between ppb and ppt see below.

Multiply ppb by 1,000 to get ppt (1 ppb = 1,000 ppt)

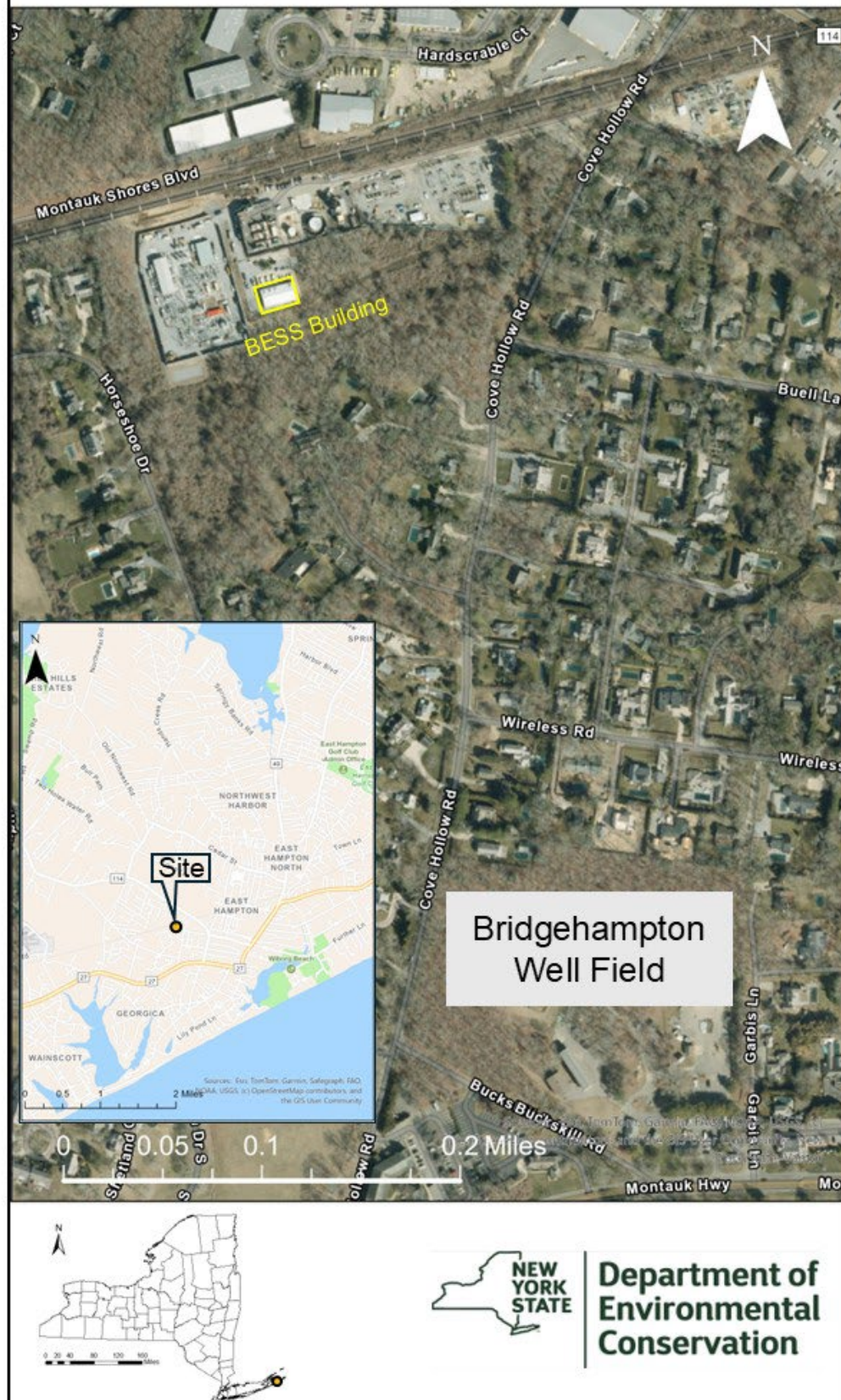
Divide ppt by 1,000 to get ppb (1 ppt = 0.001 ppb)

Examples:

1. Result of 2.5 ppb
 - a. Same result can be reported as 2,500 ppt
2. Result of 75 ppt
 - a. Same result can be reported as 0.075 ppb

If you have any questions regarding unit conversions, please reach out the contacts below

SCWA Well Field- Spill # 2601953



Ongoing Community Engagement

DEC, and DOH experts will continue to be available to answer questions from the community. Please see “Who to Contact” below for key points of contact.

Additional Information about PFAS

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PFAS Webpage

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

DEPT. OF HEALTH PFAS Webpage

https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/chemicals/chemicals_and_health/index.htm

WHO TO CONTACT

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