

Bridgehampton Wellfield PFAS Source Investigation Update

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH) continue to work together to protect public health and the environment in the East Hampton, Suffolk County, community.

The agencies are completing a field investigation that began in June 2026 to determine potential sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in groundwater. This includes Perfluoropropionic acid also known as Perfluoropropanoic acid (PFPrA), which is an Ultra Short Chain (USC) PFAS (Figure 1), detected in recent water samples collected from the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield.

Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), a state and federally listed hazardous substance, was also found at levels above standards upgradient of the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield. While it is sometimes common to find PFOS exceedances on industrial sites, the levels are high enough to warrant further investigation by DEC.

Investigation Update

A careful review of the 2023 fire response at the BESS facility and the environmental data collected to date as part of DEC's ongoing investigation suggests that the PFPrA source may be linked to the use of a vapor-based waterless fire suppression system, that, when combined with water, can break down into PFPrA.

The 2023 fire response resulted in the application of more than one million gallons of water to the East Hampton Battery Energy Storage System (EH BESS) and approximately 4,900 pounds of waterless fire suppression chemicals. The investigation points to the fire suppression system, not battery storage, as a PFPrA source.

This update will explain these preliminary findings in more detail.

What are PFAS and Ultra Short Chain PFAS?

PFAS are a group of chemicals that contain carbon chains with fluorine bonds (Figure 1). They have been used in a wide range of consumer products and industrial processes because they do not degrade easily. PFAS are classified based on the carbon chain length, with the two most commonly regulated PFAS (PFOA and PFOS) having eight carbon chains. Ultra short chain (USC) PFAS are typically classified as PFAS with less than four carbons. Shorter carbon chains lead to faster travel times in groundwater and soil, as short chain PFAS do not stick to soil particles as easily as longer chain PFAS.

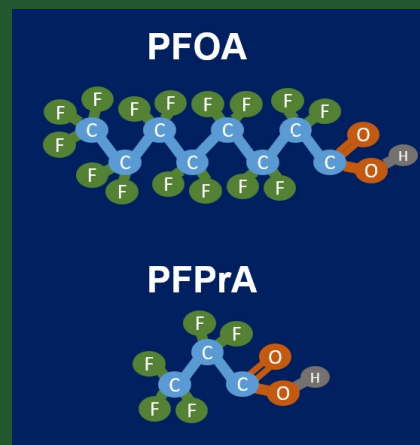


Figure 1: Structure of PFOA and PFPrA

Soil and groundwater sampling

Following the Suffolk County Water Authority's PFPrA detection in the drinking water wells, DEC, DOH, and a DEC engineering contractor developed a work plan to comprehensively investigate contamination and determine the source of the PFAS contamination to ensure protection of public health (see [East Hampton Community Update - July 2026](#)). The investigation work plan is available here:

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

To understand groundwater quality, DEC sampled seven existing National Grid monitoring wells and collected additional groundwater data alongside the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) at a total of 14 new groundwater monitoring wells through the investigation area (Figure 2). Additionally, to understand possible sources of PFAS contamination, DEC collected over 40 soil samples (Figure 3) at multiple depths from 12 locations. Sample locations are shown in the attached figures, and the status of sampling efforts is provided in Table 1 below. DEC also sent information requests to the EH BESS operators, to understand further details of the 2023 fire and fire response.



Figure 2: Monitoring well installation

Additional Information about PFAS

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION East Hampton Webpage

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/site-cleanup/regional-remediation-project-information/region-1/east-hampton-pfas-investigation>

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



Figure 3: Soil sampling

Preliminary Results

Groundwater

DEC completed initial reviews of available groundwater laboratory data for the groundwater wells sampled by DEC and SCDHS. The data is currently undergoing final data validation and will be made available in the final report DEC plans to release this fall. The preliminary data is shown in the attached figure (Figure 4). The maximum PFPrA concentration was detected adjacent to the EH BESS building. DEC has completed sampling the eight newly installed monitoring wells near the EH BESS building and expects to have additional laboratory results later in September.

Soil

DEC completed initial reviews of available soil data collected from soil borings at the EH BESS facility and from locations near newly installed SCDHS permanent off-site wells.

The data is currently undergoing final data validation and will be made available in the final report. The preliminary data is shown below in the attached figure (Figure 5) and shows the highest PFPrA concentration was detected in the shallow soil sample collected adjacent to the EH BESS building.

PFPrA Source Identification

DEC found scientific documentation (Tuma, 2008¹) indicating that the Novec 1230 fire suppression agent can degrade into PFPrA in the presence of water.

Environmental data collected by DEC and SCDHS show elevated groundwater concentrations of PFPrA south of the EH BESS facility in the regionally downgradient groundwater flow direction.

About the East Hampton Battery Storage System

DEC's investigation into the PFPrA source includes an evaluation of the East Hampton Battery Energy Storage System site that caught fire on May 31, 2023. A map of the BESS facility and the wellfield can be found on Figure 4.

2023 Battery Fire

Based on discussions with operators of the BESS, more than 180,000 battery cells were stored on-site at the time of the fire. In the fire, 672 battery cells burned, which accounts for less than 0.4% of the total of batteries stored on-site. After the battery fire, DEC collected soil samples in the vicinity of the BESS facility where firewater soaked into the soil and found no evidence of battery-related metals that would be indicative of contamination resulting from the battery fire. In addition, since local emergency responders confirmed that no PFAS-containing fire-fighting foam was used to put the fire out, no PFAS sampling took place.

Fire Suppression Systems

The East Hampton BESS was equipped with three fire suppression systems: a waterless system that discharges a chemical known commercially as Novec 1230; a water injection system; and emergency sprinklers. Novec 1230 is a fluorinated ketone, and while not considered a standard regulated PFAS compound, it has the potential to break down to USC PFAS when mixed with water. These types of waterless suppression systems are installed at facilities like data centers, fuel farms, laboratories, archives, and other places with valuable electronic equipment and documents that could be damaged by water and are not meant to be used with water.

During the fire response, the sprinklers operated for approximately 30 hours, and local officials estimate over a million gallons of water were used. At the same time, approximately 4,900 pounds of Novec 1230 were released into the BESS to remove oxygen and suppress the fire.

¹ Tuma, P.E., 2008, March. Fluoroketone C₂F₅C(O)CF₃ 2 as a heat transfer fluid for passive and pumped 2-phase applications. In 2008 Twenty-fourth Annual IEEE Semiconductor Thermal Measurement and Management Symposium (pp. 173-179). IEEE.

Additionally, soil data collected by DEC exhibits elevated concentrations of PFPrA downgradient of the EH BESS building. This environmental data suggests a preliminary indication that the EH BESS facility may be a source of the PFPrA contamination due to the fire suppression system used.

Based on the small volume of batteries involved in the fire, combined with the lack of battery-related metals in soil samples, the source of the PFPrA contamination is not likely related to battery materials or the batteries themselves.

DEC's preliminary analysis is that the significant volume of mixed water and Novec 1230 vapor and/or residue combined to form runoff containing PFPrA which drained from the EH BESS building, may have entered the environment south of the building, infiltrated the ground, and ultimately flowed south over the past three years towards the Bridgehampton Road Wellfield.

Next Steps

Investigation activities are nearly complete with continued groundwater sampling and groundwater depth gauging proceeding through early-to-mid September. Data analysis and reporting will proceed into early fall. Final reporting and other site related documents will be made available here:

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

DEC will continue field work as part of this investigation and expects to prepare a final report in Fall 2026.

DEC is also actively pursuing potential responsible parties to take on additional investigation and any necessary remedial work, with DEC oversight. DEC is working closely with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and New York State Fire to further understand the prevalence and chemical composition of the Novec 1230 "clean agent" chemical fire suppression systems at commercial and industrial facilities.

Based on current information, Novec 1230 and similar vapor systems are not designed to be used with water. DEC has confirmed that this type of fire suppression system was not used at three other

battery storage fires that have occurred in the State.

Ongoing Community Engagement

DEC and DOH experts will continue to be available to answer questions from the community. A final report outlining the work undertaken by the agencies will be released in Fall 2026. Please see "Who to Contact" below for key points of contact. DEC expects to hold a community meeting when the summary report is finalized.

WHO TO CONTACT

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DEPT. OF HEALTH

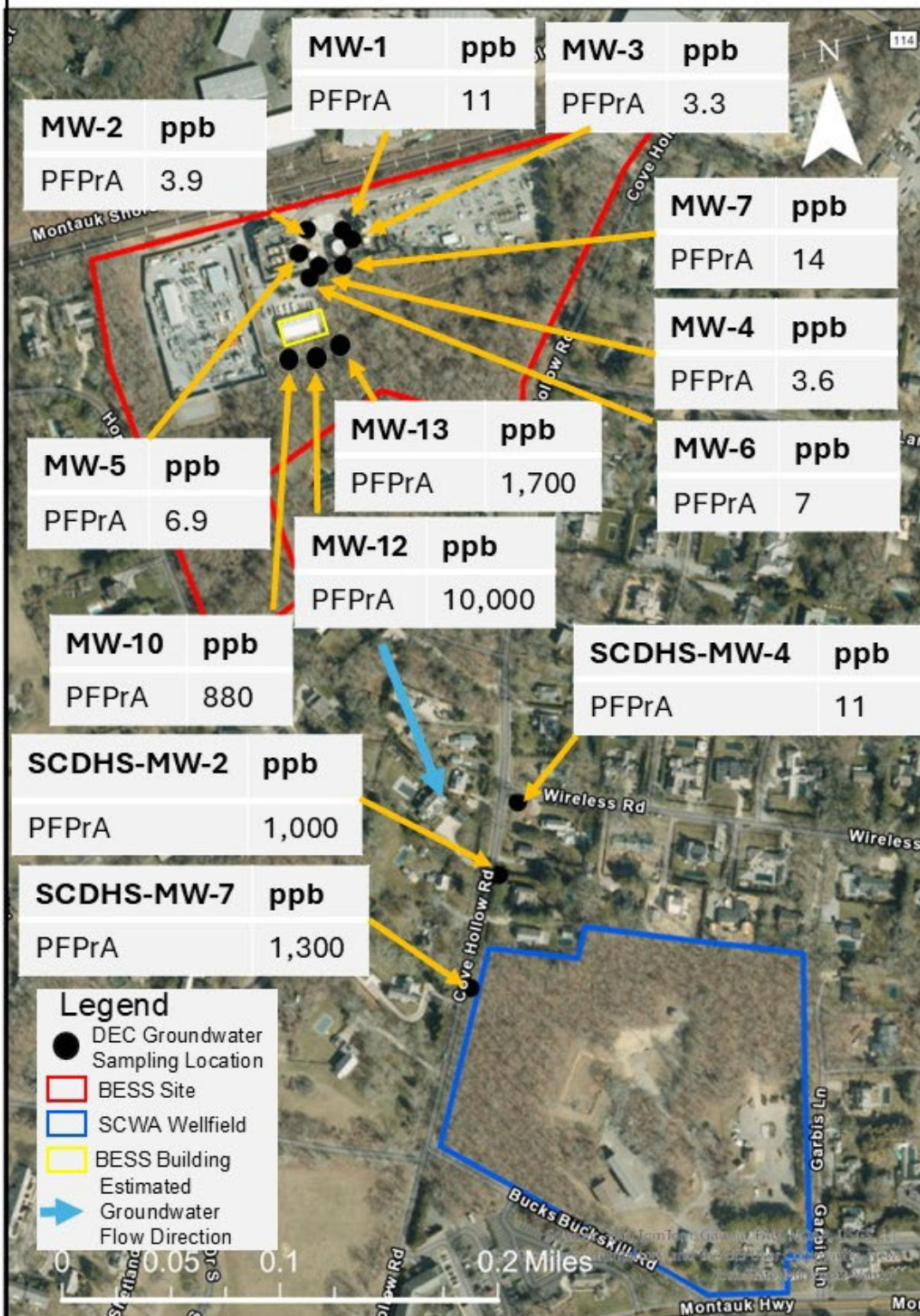
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Table 1 - Sampling Status

Investigation Activity	Number of Samples Collected	Status
DEC Drilling of 8 Soil Borings	35	Soil Samples Completed, Laboratory Results Received, Results Undergoing Data Validation
DEC Collection of Soil Samples Adjacent to SCDHS Wells	8	Soil Samples Completed, Laboratory Results Received, Results Undergoing Data Validation
DEC and SCDHS Sampling of 7 Existing National Grid Monitoring Wells	7	Groundwater Sampling Completed, Laboratory Results Received, Results Undergoing Data Validation.
DEC and SCDHS Sampling of 6 Off-Site SCDHS Monitoring Wells	6	Groundwater Sampling Completed, Laboratory Results Received, Results Undergoing Data Validation.
DEC Installation and Sampling of 8 On-site Monitoring Wells	8	Groundwater Wells Installed and Samples Being Analyzed by Certified Laboratory
SCDHS Profile Well Groundwater Sampling on Buckskill Road	6	Groundwater Samples Collected by SCDHS and Samples Being Analyzed

Figure 4: Groundwater Results



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

Figure 5: Soil Results 0-2 Inches Depth

