



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

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To: Residents and Water System Customers of Manchester by the Sea
From: Chuck Dam, DPW Director

Date: Friday, April 19, 2024
Subject: PFAS Update (<https://manchester.ma.us/777/PFAS>)

On April 10, 2024, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for six PFAS. The new EPA standards are lower than the standards set by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2021, and generally in line with the proposal EPA set forth in March of 2023. Both DEP and EPA utilize a similar approach to these chemicals, however, given that the EPA regulations are lower, DEP will adopt the EPA standards.

The limits now established by the EPA (to be adopted by DEP) will put the Town's Lincoln Street Well out of compliance. The regulation is based on running annual average (RAA) which makes it unclear if the Gravelly Pond finished water would be out of compliance, however we have had individual samples test above the standards (note: all test results are posted on the Town's PFAS website linked above). Based on the current understanding the Town would have five years (sometime in 2029) to come into compliance.

The good news is that DPW has planned on this outcome and already considered treatment possibilities for the Lincoln Street Well and for Gravelly Pond, and the potential of combining the water sources for treatment of PFAS at one location. We looked at likely construction costs, operating costs and assumed full life cycle costs of these alternatives. We also considered non-cost factors like redundancy and improving finished water quality. We believe the best path forward is to have separate treatment processes at the two different facilities. The completed studies are also available at the above link. We are currently in the midst of piloting various filter media and treatment technologies which will inform our final design requirements for bidding and construction. This is a required step in the process of changing/adding treatment and is submitted to DEP for review and approval. It is important to note that although new technologies may emerge for treatment of PFAS, treatment technologies for use in drinking water are highly regulated to ensure continuous and long-term compliance, with no negative impacts to public health or other unintended consequences. Our piloting efforts are being funded with leftover federal ARPA funds.

Future phases of design, permitting and construction will be in the tens of millions of dollars and take until the 2029 deadline to complete, although we will strive to complete the work as soon as possible. The Town has been successful in getting an initial ~\$960,000 in federal funding for design and we are asking for additional Town funds (via a bonding warrant article) at the April 2024 Annual Town Meeting and subsequent ballot vote. Now that we have the final standards, we will continue to pursue other funding options as they become available.



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The Town will continue to update the website with testing results and other information as we receive it. We appreciate your support as our understanding of the impacts of these PFAS standards to our public water system evolves. It is important to note that nothing from our source water, treatment process, or distribution system has demonstrably changed for many years with respect to PFAS; it is only the ability to test for these substances at these microscopic limits (parts per trillion) and continued research on the subject that necessitates these changes at this time. We will continue to follow the best available information and implement any required changes to our processes as soon as possible. As always, please stop by or call the DPW office at 978-526-1242 with any additional questions.