



### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

#### **The North Caldwell water system had levels of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) above a drinking water standard.**

North Caldwell Water Department is required, as a purchaser of water from Essex Fells, to provide notice that Essex Fells Water System incurred a one-year violation because their permanent treatment facility was not in operation by August 17, 2022, one year from the date of their initial PFOA Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) Exceedance.

As you know, Essex Fells water system previously violated a New Jersey drinking water standard for PFOA. The level of PFOA in the water being delivered to you is now within the New Jersey standard, but Essex Fells must take additional steps to remediate the original PFOA violation on a permanent basis at all of their treatment facilities. As our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we have already done and are doing to correct this situation.

You were previously notified of the Essex Fells PFOA maximum contaminant level (MCL) violations in public notices issued on October 21, 2021; January 14, 2022; April 8, 2022; July 9, 2022; November 18, 2022; and February 21, 2023. Per the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, we will continue to provide you with an updated public notice every 3 months until Essex Fells completes all approved remedial measures and returns to compliance with the MCL at all of their treatment facilities, including those that are currently offline. The most recent public notice and updates regarding this matter are available at: <https://www.northcaldwell.org/watersewer-department/pages/pfoa-notifications>.

Please be reminded that the North Caldwell water system buys and blends water from the Passaic Valley Water Commission and the Essex Fells water system. Essex Fells Water Department, Passaic Valley Water Commission and North Caldwell Water Departments routinely monitor each of our systems for the presence of federal and state regulated drinking water contaminants. New Jersey adopted a maximum contaminant level (MCL), for PFOA in 2020 and monitoring began in 2021. The MCL for PFOA is 0.014 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) (or 14 parts per trillion) and is based on a running annual average (RAA), in which the four most recent quarters of monitoring data are averaged. North Caldwell, as a purchaser of water, is not required to monitor for PFAS.

Passaic Valley Water Commission is compliant with all PFOA standards. During the third quarter of 2021 (July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021), Essex Fells initially exceeded the MCL for PFOA at all three of their treatment plants (TPs). Per the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act, Essex Fells water system is required to take any action necessary to bring the water into compliance with the applicable MCL within one year from the initial violation.

Two treatment plants owned by Essex Fells (TP002015 and TP003020) remain above the standard but are offline, not delivering water to the public. It should be noted for these treatment plants, the RAA for PFOA is based on samples collected previously as there are no current results since the source is no longer being used. See the table and “What is being done” below for more information.

TP001001 is the only treatment plant owned by Essex Fells currently in use and the most recent results are within the drinking water standard. Please see the table below. This was initially accomplished by Essex Fells in October 2021, after shutting down some of the 13 wells that supply TP001001 and adjusting operational protocols. Essex Fells also constructed an interim PFOA treatment facility for two (2) of their other wells at TP001001, which began operating on May 19, 2022. In March 2023, Essex Fells received NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) approval to construct a larger, permanent PFOA treatment facility at TP001001, which they expect to be completed in 2024. See “What is being done” below for more information. Nevertheless, since the larger, permanent treatment facility was not operating at Essex Fells TP001001 by August 17, 2022, one year after the date of their initial PFOA MCL exceedance, the Essex Fells water system incurred an additional violation per the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act.

On March 6, 2023 Essex Fells received results for a sample collected on February 16, 2023 showing that the water leaving the treatment plant in use had a PFOA level of 0.0103  $\mu\text{g/L}$  (10.30 parts per trillion). With this latest result, the RAA for PFOA based on samples collected over the last year is now 0.01027  $\mu\text{g/L}$  (10.27 parts per trillion).

The first quarter 2023 PFOA value, the RAA based on samples collected during the past four quarters, and the current status of each treatment plant in Essex Fells are summarized in the table below.

Essex Fells Treatment Plant (TP)	Most Recent Sample Collection Date	First Quarter 2023 PFOA Value	Running Annual Average	Current Status of TPs
TP001001	2-16-2023	0.0103 µg/L	0.01027 µg/L	Online and in service. Interim treatment facility in operation as of 5-19-2022 on 2 of 13 wells. Larger, permanent treatment facility has been designed by Essex Fells and approved; Essex Fells anticipates awarding construction contracts in second quarter 2023 and completing the permanent facility in 2024.
TP003020	N/A	N/A	N/A	Offline as of 9-24-2021 and undergoing treatment design.
TP002015	N/A	N/A	N/A	Offline as of 9-24-2021 and undergoing treatment design.

We are required to keep you informed of the status of any treatment plant with a PFOA MCL violation even if it is in Essex Fells or if it has been shut off and is no longer delivering water, as the violation still persists. That is why TP003020 and TP002015 are listed in the above table, even though they are presently offline.

**What is PFOA?**

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is a member of the group of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), used as a processing aid in the manufacture of fluoropolymers used in non-stick cookware and other products, as well as other commercial and industrial uses, based on its resistance to harsh chemicals and high temperatures. PFOA has also been used in aqueous film forming foams for firefighting and training, and it is found in consumer products such as stain resistant coatings for upholstery and carpets, water-resistant outdoor clothing, and grease proof food packaging. Major sources of PFOA in drinking water include discharge from industrial facilities where it was made or used and the release of aqueous film-forming foam. Although the use of PFOA has decreased substantially, contamination is expected to continue indefinitely because it is extremely persistent in the environment and is soluble and mobile in water.

**What does this mean?**

People who drink water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time could experience problems with their blood serum cholesterol levels, liver, kidney, immune system, or, in males, the reproductive system. Drinking water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time may also increase the risk of testicular and kidney cancer. For females, drinking water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time may cause developmental delays in a fetus and/or an infant. Some of these developmental effects may persist through childhood.

\*For specific health information, see [https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas\\_drinking%20water.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf).

For additional information regarding PFOA, including fact sheets and answers to frequently asked questions, please refer to the following resources from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Essex Fells:

- <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
- [www.essexfellsboro.com/pages/pfoa](http://www.essexfellsboro.com/pages/pfoa)

### **What should I do?**

- Anyone concerned about their health should consult with their personal healthcare provider.
- The New Jersey Department of Health advises that infant formula and other beverages for infants, such as plain water or juice, should be prepared with bottled water when PFOA is elevated in drinking water.
- Pregnant, nursing, and women considering having children may choose to use bottled water or a home filter designed to remove PFOA for drinking and cooking to reduce exposure to PFOA.
- Other people may also choose to use bottled water for drinking and cooking to reduce exposure to PFOA or a home water filter that is certified to reduce levels of PFOA.
- Home water treatment devices are available that can reduce levels of PFOA. If a water treatment device is used, it is important to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for maintenance and operation. For more specific information regarding the effectiveness of home water filters for reducing PFOA, visit the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) International website, <http://www.nsf.org/>. [NSF does not certify reduction of PFOA to the NJ MCL for PFOA.]
- Boiling your water will not remove PFOA.

For more information, see <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/pfas/>.

### **What is being done?**

As indicated above, Essex Fells has constructed a PFOA treatment facility for two (2) of their wells at TP001001 and they have shut down the other two treatment plants (TP002015 and TP003020). Essex Fells has also adjusted operational protocols, including the manner in which they blend their water sources that remain in service, in order to reduce the overall level of PFOA being delivered to the Borough of North Caldwell. As a result of these steps, Essex Fells is currently supplying water to North Caldwell that is currently below the 0.014 µg/L MCL for PFOA and meets all other water quality standards.

Design plans and specifications for a larger PFOA treatment facility at TP001001, which will remove PFOA contaminants on a permanent basis from the water drawn from 13 of their 16 wells, have been submitted by Essex Fells to the NJDEP in August 2022 and approved by the NJDEP in March 2023. Essex Fells anticipates awarding construction contracts in the next several months and having such facility completed in 2024. Upon completion, the new treatment facility will remove PFOA contaminants from the water drawn from 13 of the 16 wells owned by Essex Fells. Essex Fells engineers and other professionals are in the process of finalizing the design and project details for two additional PFOA treatment facilities, at TP002015 and TP003020, which will remove PFOA on a permanent basis from water drawn from their 3 remaining wells and will allow Essex Fells to bring those 3 wells back into service.

To view all the drinking water quality data collected by the Essex Fells visit [https://www9.state.nj.us/DEP\\_WaterWatch\\_public/index.jsp](https://www9.state.nj.us/DEP_WaterWatch_public/index.jsp) and enter NJ0706001 for the PWSID.

To view the drinking water quality data collected by the Borough of North Caldwell, enter NJ0715001 for the PWSID. Please note that North Caldwell, as a purchaser of water, is not required to monitor for PFAS.

For more information, please contact Kevin O'Sullivan at 973-228-6412 or [kosullivan@northcaldwell.org](mailto:kosullivan@northcaldwell.org) or 141 Gould Avenue, North Caldwell, NJ 07006.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by North Caldwell Water Depart., Water System ID#: NJ0715001.

Date distributed: May 18, 2023