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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The North Caldwell water system has 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 violated a New Jersey drinking water standard. 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.

Essex Fells 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.

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. We previously notified you, in a letter dated October 12, 2021, that based on Essex Fells samples collected in the first three quarters of 2021, the RAA for the third quarter exceeded the MCL for PFOA at three treatment plants in their system. Since that time, in order to reduce the level of PFOA in the current water supply from Essex Fells below 14 parts per trillion, Essex Fells has taken two of those three treatment plants (TP003020 and TP002015) offline and removed from service those wells serving TP001001 that had caused PFOA levels in excess of the MCL. Water which is supplied by Passaic Valley Water Commission and blended into the system remains in compliance of this standard and all other standards.

On November 10, 2021 Essex Fells received notice that the sample collected in the fourth quarter of 2021 for the treatment plant that remains in service (TP001001) showed that their system continues to exceed the PFOA MCL based on the RAA. However, the individual sample result for the fourth quarter value is 0.008 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (8 parts per trillion).

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

Essex Fells Treatment Plant (TP)	Most Recent Sample Collection Date	Fourth Quarter PFOA Value	Running Annual Average	Current Status of TP
TP001001	10-22-2021	0.008 $\mu\text{g/L}$	0.017 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Online and in service and undergoing treatment design.
TP003020	7-21-2021	n/a	0.022 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Offline as of 9-24-2021 and undergoing treatment design.
TP002015	7-21-2021	n/a	0.016 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Offline as of 9-24-2021 and undergoing treatment design.

We are required to keep you informed of the status of any Essex Fells' treatment plant with a PFOA MCL violation even 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.

Pursuant to NJ Department of Environmental Protection regulations, we will re-issue a notice to you quarterly until Essex Fells has taken permanent remedial action and their RAAs are below the MCL.

What is PFOA?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is a member of the group of chemicals called 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 could, over time, 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 additional information regarding PFOA, including fact sheets and answers to frequently asked questions, please refer to the following resources from the NJ Dept. of Health, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and Essex Fells:

- https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf
- <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/supporting-documents-drinking-waterhealth-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
- www.essexfellsboro.com/pages/pfoa

What should I do?

- If you have specific health concerns, a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at higher risk than other individuals and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.
- The New Jersey Department of Health advises that infant formula and other beverages for infants, such as 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 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. 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/>.
- Boiling your water will not remove PFOA.

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

What is being done?

Since September 24, 2021 Essex Fells has shut down two treatment plants and several of their water supply wells with higher concentrations of PFOA. 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 their customers including the customers of the North Caldwell water system. As a result of these steps, Essex Fells is currently supplying water to North Caldwell that is below the 0.014 µg/L MCL for PFOA and meets all other water quality standards. To that end, the Borough of North Caldwell resumed buying water from Essex Fells on or about Thursday, November 11, 2021 after being furnished with water quality test results from Essex Fells which substantiated the effect of their modifications noted above. Additionally, the Borough of Essex Fells has engaged the services of a professional engineering firm to design PFAS treatment facilities that will remove the PFOA contaminants in their water supply on a permanent basis. They are in the process of finalizing the project details, including the cost, with the engineers, contractors and other professionals. They anticipate these permanent treatment facilities will be completed by April 2023.

To view all the drinking water quality data collected by the Essex Fells visit https://www9.state.nj.us/DEP/WaterWatch_public/index.jsp and enter NJ0706001 for the PWSID.

For more information, please contact Kevin O'Sullivan at 973-228-6412 or kosullivan@northcaldwell.org.

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: January 14, 2022