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EPA Environmental News

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EPA Completes Drinking Water Sampling in Dimock, Pa.

PHILADELPHIA (July 25, 2012) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it has completed its sampling of private drinking water wells in Dimock, Pa. where data previously supplied to the agency by residents, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Cabot Oil and Gas Exploration indicated elevated levels of water contaminants. EPA's sampling of private wells serving 64 homes did not show levels of contaminants that would call for further EPA action.

"Our goal was to provide the Dimock community with complete and reliable information about the presence of contaminants in their drinking water and to determine whether further action was warranted to protect public health," said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. "The sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action. Throughout EPA's work in Dimock, the agency has used the best available scientific data to provide clarity to Dimock residents and address their concerns about the safety of their drinking water."

EPA visited Dimock in late 2011, surveyed residents regarding their private wells and reviewed hundreds of pages of drinking water data supplied to the agency by Dimock residents, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Cabot. Because data for some homes showed elevated contaminant levels and several residents expressed concern about their drinking water, EPA determined that well sampling was necessary to gather additional data and evaluate whether residents had access to safe drinking water.

Between January and June 2012, EPA sampled private drinking water wells serving 64 homes, including two rounds of sampling at four wells where EPA was delivering temporary water supplies as a precautionary step in response to prior data indicating the well water contained levels of contaminants that pose a health concern. At one of those wells EPA did find an elevated level of manganese in untreated well water. The two residences serviced by the well each have water treatment systems that can reduce manganese to levels that do not present a health concern.

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As a result of the two rounds of sampling at these four wells, EPA has determined that it is no longer necessary to provide residents with alternative water. EPA has informed the residents of its plan to disconnect the alternate water and will work with them on the actual schedule for that to occur.

Overall, during the sampling in Dimock, EPA found hazardous substances, specifically arsenic, barium or manganese, all of which are also naturally occurring substances, in well water at five homes at levels that could present a health concern. In all cases the residents have now or will have their own treatment systems that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap. EPA has provided the residents with all of their sampling results and has no further plans to conduct additional drinking water sampling in Dimock.

For more information on the results of sampling, visit:
http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/states/pa.html .

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