Hoosick Falls Update: EPA Expands Sampling Program in Areas Near McCaffrey Street Facility

Community Update No. 4 **Spring 2016**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is continuing to investigate the Hoosick Falls perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) contamination in coordination with the Village of Hoosick Falls, the county health department, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

In February 2016, EPA collected soil samples from the Hoosick Falls Ballfields and Athletic Field. Those sampling events found levels of PFOA and related compounds ranging from non-detect to 0.021 parts per million (ppm), as compared with EPA's action level for PFOA in soil, which is currently 15.6 ppm. These levels will not necessitate any need for cleanup work in any of the areas sampled. The highest concentrations of PFOA and related compounds were generally found deeper than three inches under the surface. The results are discussed in a separate fact sheet which is available online at http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/hoosick-falls-water-contamination.

In spring 2016, EPA will be initiating two additional sampling events: 1) soil sampling in areas near the Saint-Gobain McCaffrey Street facility, and 2) sampling of soil, groundwater and storm drains at the McCaffrey Street facility. These two efforts are discussed below.

I. Soil Sampling Investigation Near McCaffrey St. Facility

The purpose of this soil sampling investigation is to determine if soil in certain properties near Saint-Gobain's McCaffrey Street facility has been impacted by past operations at the facility. EPA, or a potentially responsible party working under EPA's oversight, will be testing the soil for a wide range of contaminants, including PFOA and other related compounds, which could have been deposited by air emissions or discharged directly to the ground surface.

WHICH SPECIFIC AREAS ARE BEING SAMPLED?

Samples will be collected from approximately 19 locations at 12 to 13 residential properties on Carey Avenue between Waterworks Road and the west end of Carey Avenue. In addition, approximately five soil and/or sediment sampling locations within the swampy area southeast of the McCaffrey Street facility, and approximately nine locations on the football field and picnic area at the end of Waterworks Road, will be sampled. A total of approximately 33 locations will be sampled. At every sampling location, samples will be collected from two shallow depths (0-3 inches and 3-12 inches below the ground surface). At approximately a third of these locations, additional samples will be collected from several deeper intervals reaching down to the water table.

The samples will be analyzed for PFOA and related chemicals, as well as volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and metals. The sampling results will be evaluated to determine whether a cleanup is needed and/or more comprehensive sampling is necessary.

HOW WERE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES SELECTED FOR SAMPLING AND HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY PROPERTY WILL BE TESTED?

The residential properties along the portion of Carey Street closest to the McCaffrey Street facility that will be sampled are considered representative of the surrounding areas and will be used to determine if an area-wide impact exists. Not all properties in the McCaffrey Street facility area will be sampled. EPA will contact residents over the next few weeks to request access for the sampling. If results indicate that more testing is necessary, additional locations may be sampled in the future.

WHEN WILL THE SOIL SAMPLING RESULTS BE AVAILABLE?

The results will be announced several weeks after the sampling is conducted, once the data comes back from the lab. Results of the residential sampling will be shared with the individual homeowners. The results of the sampling of the swampy area southeast of the facility and the football field and picnic area at the end of Waterworks Road will be made publicly available.

NEXT STEPS

If hazardous substances, including PFOA or other contaminants, are present in residential properties, or in the other sampling areas, EPA will determine what additional actions may be necessary.

WHAT IS PFOA?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) belongs to a group of chemicals used to make household and commercial products that resist heat and chemical reactions and repel oil, stains, grease and water. PFOA was widely found in non-stick pots and pans, carpets and fire-fighting foam.

WHY IS PFOA A PROBLEM?

PFOA does not break down easily and therefore is very persistent in the environment. Its toxicity and persistence in the environment pose potential adverse effects to human health and the environment.

II. Superfund Hazard Ranking System with Sampling

In addition to the soil sampling discussed above, the EPA will conduct Hazard Ranking System (HRS) sampling to determine if the McCaffrey Street site is eligible for inclusion on the federal Superfund National Priorities List. The HRS is a system EPA uses to score and evaluate potential threats to public health and the environment posed by uncontrolled releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants. Sites that score at or above the required threshold qualify for remedial action under the Superfund program and are proposed for listing on the EPA National Priorities List, a list of the most serious sites identified for long-term cleanup.

WHAT TYPE OF SAMPLING IS BEING CONDUCTED AS PART OF THIS ASSESSMENT, AND WHERE?

The EPA will do several types of sampling. The sampling activities will include:

- Installing and taking samples from nine groundwater monitoring wells within ½-mile of the McCaffrey Street facility;
- Sampling of groundwater from three public supply wells along Waterworks Road, a public observation well on the west bank of the Hoosic River, and all existing monitoring wells on the McCaffrey Street facility property;
- Collecting soil samples at 15 locations at the McCaffrey Street facility; and
- Collecting water samples from the storm drains, manholes and sewage ejector pit at the McCaffrey Street facility.

NEXT STEPS

The work described above will be conducted throughout the spring. The laboratory results are expected to come back in mid-summer 2016. The information gained from the HRS sampling will help EPA to determine whether hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants have been released from the McCaffrey Street facility. The data will be evaluated and the site will be scored using the EPA HRS. If the site scores at or above the required threshold, it will be considered for inclusion on the EPA's National Priorities List, which will mean it has been identified for a long-term cleanup.

ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION AND INFORMATION

The EPA, NYSDEC and NYSDOH will be planning and conducting soil, groundwater and surface water sampling in other areas of Hoosick Falls, and will continue to provide updates on the status of the investigation.

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Visit the EPA's website at:

http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/hoosick-falls-water-contamination