To: Beauvais, Joel[Beauvais.Joel@epa.gov]; Burke, Thomas[Burke.Thomas@epa.gov]
From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Tue 3/15/2016 1:17:09 PM
Subject: Fwd: News Clips (PFOA)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Region2 PAD News <Region2_PAD_News@epa.gov>
Date: March 15, 2016 at 8:21:37 AM EDT
To: "R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff)" <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: News Clips (PFOA)

NYT: Tainted-Water Worries Spread to Vermont Village

By VIVIAN YEE

MARCH 14, 2016

Photo After an industrial chemical was found in a number of North Bennington's private wells, the State of Vermont is now sampling 185 wells in the village. Credit Nathaniel Brooks for The New York Times

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt. — Above the Walloomsac River, where ramshackle farmhouses sit just downhill from tidy homes with organic gardens out back, the old ChemFab plant was, for many, a respected local employer from the days when this village's prosperity depended on industry.

For others, it was an eyesore and a nuisance, its smokestacks choking their homes with an acrid smell that seemed to cause headaches, sore throats and nosebleeds. But since the plant shut down more than a dozen years ago, few had given a thought to its environmental legacy.

In recent weeks, however, several private wells near the ChemFab plant have tested positive for an industrial chemical that has been linked to cancer, thyroid disease and serious complications during pregnancy, making North Bennington — better known for its bed-and-breakfasts and Bennington College — the latest in a growing list of Northeastern communities unsettled by a contaminated-water scare.

It started across the New York border in the village of Hoosick Falls, where the discovery of the chemical, perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, in the public drinking water has prompted residents to rely on bottled water amid charges that the state took far too long to respond. It was found in public wells in Petersburgh, N.Y., the site of a plastics factory south of Hoosick Falls.

And last week, as environmental officials in Vermont and New York mounted statewide searches for other potentially contaminated areas, officials in Merrimack, N.H., home to yet another chemical plant, announced that the chemical had cropped up there, too.

Photo David Barber worked at the ChemFab plant for 21 years. “We were kind of young and foolish,” he said. “We never really talked about it; we never really thought too much about it.” Credit Nathaniel Brooks for The New York Times

“From an environmental perspective, we kind of fell asleep at the wheel when it came to those components,” said Kiah Morris, the Vermont state representative whose legislative district includes Bennington. “There’s things we didn’t know, and there’s things we hoped we wouldn’t find out.”

The number of people found to be drinking water tainted by PFOA is almost certain to grow. PFOA was once used to manufacture a legion of modern conveniences including nonstick pans, microwaveable popcorn wrappers and Gore-Tex boots — practically anything that is nonstick, stain-resistant or water-repellent — but its health effects and the way it spreads are not well understood. But even as the chemical continues to contaminate water across the country, scientists say, government agencies at all levels, from local health departments to the federal Environmental Protection Agency, have yet to grapple with the full extent of the problem, or with what it will take to clean it up.

“I think when people look,” said Arlene Blum, the executive director of the Green Science Policy Institute, “they’re going to find it.”

The State of Vermont is now sampling 185 private wells in North Bennington, all of which fall within a 1.5-mile radius of the ChemFab plant, which closed in 2002. Bottled water has been distributed. Carbon-filtration systems, an imperfect and temporary fix, have been installed on some wells.

“Every time I think about it, I just feel like crying,” said Virginia Barber, 64, who since 1977 has lived in a house no bigger than a trailer at the end of Scarey Lane, overlooking the factory. Hers was one of the first few wells in the village to test positive for PFOA.

Ms. Barber, her husband and their two dogs are drinking bottled water; she is unsure whether she should bathe the dogs in it, too. She keeps her showers short. She does not know whether to rinse pasta in the well water. She keeps reminding herself that she cannot use the ice from the automatic ice-maker.

Photo A water cooler in the home of David and Virginia Barber. Their well was one of the first in the village to test positive for PFOA. Credit Nathaniel Brooks for The New York Times

Her husband, David Barber, 67, worked at the plant for 21 years, coating fabrics in the Teflon material. He recalled seeing small specks of the material get stuck on the ends of co-workers’ cigarettes and turn to ash as the smokers inhaled that, too. Within a couple of hours, they would get chills and sweats, as if they were coming down with the flu.

“We were kind of young and foolish,” Mr. Barber said. “We never really talked about it; we

never really thought too much about it. It paid good, and they treated us fairly well."

An analysis earlier this month by the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit organization that has urged the E.P.A. to lower the level at which it says water with PFOA is safe to drink, found that the chemical had been detected in 103 water systems, serving nearly seven million people in 27 states. (That does not include smaller water systems like those of Hoosick Falls or Petersburgh, which were not covered under the agency's testing program.)

The E.P.A. does not have a formal regulatory standard for the chemical, relying instead on a provisional health advisory level for drinking water, which it has announced it will update this spring. Some states lack even that.

Trying to beat back criticism that New York State's response in Hoosick Falls was, at best, blinkered — the state repeatedly said its water was safe last year before declaring it a Superfund site in January — New York officials have suggested that the fault lay with the absence of strong guidelines from the federal agency. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo again called on the E.P.A. to release a long-term advisory level for the chemical on Sunday, when he visited Hoosick Falls for the first time after its water was deemed unsafe.

"We're going to continue to find situations like this all throughout the state, all throughout the country," he said.

Photo The ChemFab plant was for many a respected employer in the days when the village's prosperity depended on industry. Credit Nathaniel Brooks for The New York Times

In Vermont, the Health Department did not issue a health advisory level for the chemical — at 20 parts per trillion, it is well below that of the federal guideline set for Hoosick Falls, which is 100 — until state environmental officials began testing wells in North Bennington last month. They, in turn, had become aware of the possibility of contamination there only after one resident, alarmed by the news from Hoosick Falls, contacted local elected officials.

Tests have shown that the public water supplies of both Bennington and North Bennington, which serve a vast majority of residents, are free of PFOA.

"We didn't really know about it, we weren't testing for it, but now we know about it, we're testing for it, we're starting to look at where else it may be," said Chuck Schwer, the state environmental department's director of waste management and prevention, who has begun identifying other industrial sites across the state that may need testing. "We're still in the very early stages, but now that we know, it's like, we can't have another North Bennington situation catch us off guard."

There were some here who were concerned that the ChemFab plant was not following regulations, like Annette Griffith, 51, who worked there for five years in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Ms. Griffith said she brought her concerns about smoke and workers' health problems to managers several times, only to be ignored.

Now she wonders whether she should have been even more outspoken. She was eight months pregnant when she left ChemFab, and her son was born with learning disabilities.

“There’s no way they didn’t know,” Ms. Griffith said.

A spokeswoman for Saint-Gobain, the company that owns the plants in Hoosick Falls and Merrimack, and took over the ChemFab plant in 2000, said she could not comment on “what happened before our tenure.” The spokeswoman, Dina Silver Pokedoff, said Saint-Gobain had offered to pay for bottled water and filtration systems for those affected.

Photo Sandy Sumner and his wife, who live near the plant, often woke up with sore throats, migraines and nosebleeds. Credit Nathaniel Brooks for The New York Times

When Andy Beckerman, 70, and Carol Poppe, 65, moved into their home near the ChemFab plant about 18 years ago, they noticed a nauseating odor seeping in at all hours, as if something sugary had burned in the oven. Their next-door neighbor, Sandy Sumner, 63, and his wife often woke up with sore throats, migraines and nosebleeds.

“Here we are, organic everything, and now we’re blasted with PFOA,” said Ms. Poppe, laughing ruefully at the thought of the organic soil they had brought in for their vegetable patch.

Many residents also worry about the values of their houses, which are likely to plummet with the mere mention of water contamination. “We’re middle class; we don’t have a ton of change,” Mr. Sumner said. He said he and his wife were planning to use the proceeds from the house to retire. “But now,” he said, “we’re going to have to stay here until we can’t stay here anymore.”

In the nearby rural village of Petersburgh, where Taconic Plastics’s plant on Coon Brook Road is by far the biggest employer, PFOA was found in public wells that serve dozens of families after Taconic notified New York officials that the plant’s water had tested positive for the chemical.

Taconic had found high levels of PFOA in its water a decade ago, officials said; it was apparently concerned enough to provide filtration systems and bottled water to homes by the plant. But though it informed the state in 2005, the discovery did not raise alarms at the state level until recently because PFOA was, and remains, an unregulated contaminant, state officials said.

Rory Lynch, whose private well in Petersburgh is being tested, said she had thought about leaving the home that has been hers since 1976. One option, she said, was to move near her son in Colorado. Then came a caveat.

“I don’t know if they have PFOA, too,” she said.

TOXIN SCARE 'NOT UNIQUE'

03/13/2016

Times Union

Hoosick Falls

Gov. Andrew Cuomo made a hastily organized first visit to this tiny community beleaguered by water contamination Sunday morning -- offering a message of confidence on one hand that the problem is getting fixed, while suggesting that such public health crises will become more commonplace statewide.

The governor's office said Saturday night that Cuomo was expected to be in New York City, but then put out a notice about the press conference in Hoosick Falls early Sunday morning. As a result, not many community members were present outside the press briefing held at a state Department of Environmental Conservation-rented command post on Route 7 about 11 a.m. Sunday. The governor's office said Cuomo met with about a dozen Hoosick Falls residents privately after the press conference.

The governor, flanked by Village Mayor David Borge, Town of Hoosick Supervisor Mark Surdam and Republican state Sen. Kathy Marchione of Halfmoon, said the purpose of his visit was to announce that a temporary filtration system on the village's municipal water system was showing no detectable signs of the chemical perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, which has contaminated the water.

Hoosick Falls water, however, is not able to be consumed until the entire system is flushed with the newly filtered water. State officials said that process is expected to be complete by March 21, and testing of the water will continue.

Cuomo also announced that the companies that have been named as responsible for the chemical contamination, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell International, will deliver bottled water to residents who cannot physically go to the local Tops supermarket where it is being offered for free. He said residents also will be reimbursed for half of the water bills that they've been expected to pay, up to $240,000 in total.

But the governor bristled when questioned at the press conference about why he hadn't visited Hoosick Falls since a spotlight was placed on the contamination by concerned citizens and profiled in the first in a series of stories published in the Times Union in December.

PFOA, a chemical used to make non-stick coating and heat-resistent wiring, is a human carcinogen that can cause rare forms of cancer as well as thyroid disease, and can affect developing fetuses. It was a private Hoosick Falls resident, Michael Hickey, whose father died of cancer, who had water tested and found the presence of PFOA in 2014. The chemical has since been revealed to have poisoned wells in the town of Hoosick, the nearby town of Petersburgh and the village of North Bennington, Vt., where an old Saint-Gobain plant shut down in 2002.

The Times Union has reported that county and state officials knew about PFOA's presence when Hickey alerted them in 2014, but told residents in a letter attached to their water bills in Jan. 2015 that the chemical did not pose a concern -- despite EPA warnings to the contrary.

After heavy press coverage in the past few months, the state subsequently declared the

Saint-Gobain plant a Superfund site, and has been offering well testing, filtration systems, and blood testing for free to residents.

On Sunday, Cuomo defended how he quickly jettisons to weather or breaking news events (such as Saturday's fatal tugboat crash near the new Tappan Zee Bridge), and had not yet visited northeastern Rensselaer County.

"Every situation that deals with an emergency, there's always criticism," he said. "Some snarky reporter always finds something to criticize. I think it's in the job description. ... If you were going to stay away from a situation because you were going to be criticized, you would be under your bed as an elected official."

Cuomo said the state is investigating a permanent fix for the contamination, including using a new well, the Hoosic River or possibly finding a new water supply elsewhere. At the press conference, Cuomo also congratulated the mayor and supervisor "who've done an extraordinary job."

Borge was criticized for telling residents early on that it was a "personal choice" whether to drink the water or not.

While the governor had a message of reassurance that the water system will be fixed, he also said there are 80,000 unregulated chemicals in the world, and that such contaminations will become standard in communities like Hoosick Falls in the future.

"Today is good news," Cuomo said. However, "this is not unique to Hoosick Falls. This is a problem communities across the state continue to face."

He also went back to criticizing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, saying that the government group has still not established what amount of PFOA is safe to drink over the long-term. In late 2015, the EPA said that PFOA wasn't safe if consumed over the short term at 400 parts per trillion; they have since lowered it to 100 parts per trillion.

Cuomo, along with the governors of Vermont and New Hampshire, sent a letter to the EPA last week seeking uniform PFOA standards. On Sunday, he said the state has yet to hear back from the EPA.

The governor was cautious about New York setting its own PFOA standards, even as Vermont sets its acceptable levels of the chemical at 20 parts per trillion.

"Just pick it, you have the scientists, EPA," Cuomo said of the acceptable levels. "We want a national standard because this shouldn't be a question for anyone. And I don't want Vermont to have safer standards than New York. I don't want artificially low standards."

" 'Why don't you pick the lowest number possible?' " he continued. "Because then you could have hundreds of communities installing very expensive filtration systems that don't need it."

On Sunday, Cuomo's office said that among 464 private and public wells tested in and around the Village of Hoosick Falls, 13 percent, or 59, have had PFOA levels at more than 100 parts per trillion.

Those who met with Cuomo after the press briefing had mixed experiences.

"Overall, I went in kind of feeling a little bit negative, and I walked out much more positive," said Penny Acre, who lives just outside the village and is on a private well system. Acre has a filter installed on her well, she said. The well has not tested positive for PFOA, though a neighbor's has.

Ted Senecal Jr., who lives in the village, said he worries about what will happen once the noise over PFOA contamination has gone down.

"I just feel that once everything has quieted down and Hoosick Falls isn't in the limelight -- we're not New York City; we've got 3,500 residents in the village -- we're going to be forgotten about, eventually," he said.

WNYT

State knew about PFOA in Hoosick Falls in late 2014

Asa Stackel

03/14/2016

HOOSICK FALLS -- Governor Andrew Cuomo came to Hoosick Falls with good news Sunday, but we've been asking for more than a month, how long the state knew about the bad news before they acted.

The governor told Dan Bazile on tape Sunday that he would get the dates to us on Monday. After emails Monday morning, the governor's office gave us a call after our 5 o'clock piece that revealed the timeline of the state's involvement in Hoosick Falls.

According to a stack of documents and emails from Rensselaer County, PFOA was first detected in August 2014 by Hoosick Falls resident Michael Hickey. Hoosick Falls told Rensselaer County and the county told the state way back then.

The village began doing its own testing to verify Hickey's claim. Results came back in late fall of 2014 showing PFOA was indeed over the 400 parts per trillion EPA level. So the village took the most contaminated well, the primary one, off line.

In January 2015, the state told the county and village in an obtained email the 540 parts per trillion level detected was not an "immediate health hazard". The recommendation sent from Kim Evans of the state health department says the detected level was, "50,000 times lower than PFOA exposures that are known to cause health effects in animals."

Ten months later in October 2015, EPA Region Two got involved. And finally in November of last year, the EPA told the village that residents should stop drinking the water.

It took more than a year after initial PFOA results, for the taps to be turned off.

On Sunday, Cuomo defended the state's handling of the problem.

"We were following the EPA guideline, which was 400 parts per trillion for short-term exposure. There was no guidance for long-term exposure," said Cuomo in Hoosick Falls.

Even when the short term EPA standard was 400 parts per trillion, the state told the village the water presented no immediate health hazard. The governor's office says the NYS Department of Health first knew about the PFOA situation in August 2014. They say they've taken swift action.

The 5:15 pm Monday emailed response from Leo Rosales of the governor's office is below. Our questions are in bold.

When did the state first become aware of PFOA levels in Hoosick Falls? How high were the levels?

As we have stated repeatedly: In August of 2014, Rensselaer County Health Department informed the DOH that a private citizen had taken samples at one private well which showed levels of PFOA in the water.

What actions were taken at those times? Were wells taken off-line?

DOH began providing guidance on assessing and evaluating PFOA sample results in October 2014, consistent with protocols for unregulated contaminants. In October and November of 2014, the Village of Hoosick Falls collected samples from the municipal water system to test for PFOA. In December 2014, the village informed residents of the PFOA test results, and informed DOH that it had stopped using the single well with elevated levels of PFOA.

DOH continued providing guidance on test results while the Village of Hoosick Falls began assessing and evaluating techniques to remove PFOA from the water supply using three methods: chemical oxidation, reverse osmosis, and granular activate carbon (GAC).

In December of 2015, the NYS Department of Health issued a, “fact sheet”, which indicated that, “Health effects are not expected to occur from normal use of the water”. In January of 2016, people were told not to consume the water in Hoosick Falls. What changed in the time between those two statements?

We have been consistent in encouraging residents to reduce their exposure to PFOA. The fact sheet clearly states that “human studies show associations between increased PFOA levels in blood and an increased risk for several health effects” and said explicitly that “we recommend that measures be taken to reduce people’s exposure to PFOA.” The fact sheet noted the use of “bottled water for drinking and food preparation or the installation of water filters to reduce exposure.”

Closing Statement

This administration has taken swift action and our priority has been ensuring the safety of residents by making available $10 million for hundreds of water filtrations systems,

overseeing and assessing the installation of a temporary municipal filtration system, testing private wells, conducting a comprehensive bio-monitoring program, working to identify alternate permanent drinking water source and dispatching top administration officials and DOH and DEC staff to the village, all this while holding St. Gobain and Honeywell accountable for the contamination. We will not rest until everyone in the community has drinking water acceptable for all uses.

Some in Hoosick Falls unhappy with Cuomo's remarks during visit

By Lindsay Nielsen

Published: March 14, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Some people in Hoosick Falls were less than pleased with what Governor Andrew Cuomo had to say during his visit to the area on Sunday.

The public was not allowed inside during the governor's press conference. They had to wait to watch it on the news.

"This is not unique to Hoosick Falls," Cuomo said.

Angela Wason is part of a volunteer group often called the Water Angels. She delivers hundreds of gallons a day to those in the village who aren't able to go to Tops Supermarket to get it themselves.

"To us it's unique," she said. "We're a small community. We all tend to stick together, so it's unique to us."

Wason said she watched Cuomo's press conference, and she was not pleased with some of his comments regarding the village's water filtration system. Cuomo made the comments after being asked why he didn't visit Hoosick Falls sooner.

Cuomo said he had meetings and deployed agencies as soon as he was aware of the water contamination and that it wasn't the type of emergency where it was necessary for him to make a visit.

"I saw the filter today," he said on Sunday. "It's an attractive filter. It's a big filter. Looks good in gray. I don't know if they come in other colors. I don't know if they have a designer model, but my seeing the filter and touching the filter was not all that relevant I think."

"I was kind of excited that he was going to be here, and then, once I saw it on the news last night, I was, like, I'm glad I missed that because I don't feel maybe he's taking it as serious as he should be, especially the length of time that it took for him to get here," Wason said.

Wason delivers water to 76-year-old Lorelie Fagley. She also wasn't pleased with Cuomo's visit. She said many questions were left unanswered.

"What are we going to do?" she wondered. "How are we going to clean it up?"

There's also more confusion.

"They say they're allowed a certain amount of this, quote, poison," she said. "Well, why are they allowed any of the poison."

Fagley referred to the advisory level for the unregulated chemical PFOA that's contaminated the village water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has an advisory level of 400 parts per trillion.

But Vermont has set its state advisory level at 20 ppt, and New Jersey has set its advisory level at 40 ppt.

Cuomo has called upon the EPA to regulate PFOA and come up with a national safety level for PFOA.

"Just pick it," he said. "You have the scientists; EPA."

The EPA said the following in response:

New York State has the primary role in implementing its drinking water program. It has experience in dealing with drinking water contaminants and understands the nature of health advisories. Because PFOA had been detected in the public water supply in Hoosick Falls at more than 600 ppt, EPA recommended that until a New York State Department of Health-approved treatment system is in place at the public water supply and confirmed to be consistently removing PFOA to acceptable levels, the public should not drink water from the Hoosick Falls public water supply or use it for cooking.

EPA discussed these recommendations with the state and has been working closely with them. EPA's advice was a result of specific circumstances that existed in that community, including the fact that: 1) free bottled water was being made available to everyone in the community; and 2) the state health department had already offered to test, for PFOA, the private well of everyone in the Town who requested such testing. EPA's recommendation was also based on site specific information as well as information in the most recent EPA report on PFOA toxicity which underwent external peer review in August, 2014.

EPA is currently using the best science to develop lifetime health advisory levels for PFOA and PFOS, which the agency expects to release in spring 2016. When issued, the lifetime health advisory for PFOA will supersede the provisional health advisory of 400 parts per trillion for PFOA issued in 2009. Lifetime health advisories serve as guidance and are benchmarks for determining if concentrations of chemicals in tap water from public utilities are safe for public consumption. They provide state, local and tribal governments with non-regulatory guidance to make decisions on a local basis in cases where a chemical is not federally regulated.

EPA is currently working with communities across the U.S. to monitor for the presence of six perfluorinated compounds in drinking water, including PFOA and PFOS, under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. EPA has worked to share results from this monitoring to enable state and local decision making on how best to address these unregulated contaminants.

“Hopefully, change those guidelines and make them better for somebody else,” Wason said.

Cuomo also announced the temporary village water filtration system is removing PFOA from the water, and its non detectable now, but some, like Fagley, said they still won’t drink the water again.

“I’ll put it this way,” she said. “I want all the bottled water I can lay my hands on.”

The governor’s office sent the following information to NEWS10 ABC regarding the PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls:

When did the state first become aware of PFOA levels in Hoosick Falls? How high were the levels?

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private wells, conducting a comprehensive bio-monitoring program, working to identify alternate permanent drinking water source and dispatching top administration officials and DOH and DEC staff to the village, all this while holding St. Gobain and Honeywell accountable for the contamination. We will not rest until everyone in the community has drinking water acceptable for all uses.

Residents: Cuomo Needed to Come to Hoosick Falls Sooner

By Emily DeFeciani

March 14, 2016

Since the water crisis began, residents of Hoosick Falls waited more than 100 days for their governor to visit.

"I think if you're in a position where you have a lot of power and authority, the minute something comes to your attention you should be right on it, especially when there's serious ramifications for people's health," said one local resident.

Governor Andrew Cuomo explained, "We're dealing with issues all across the state. You go personally where you're needed personally."

Sunday, Cuomo made his first appearance in the village and addressed criticism from those saying it was long overdue.

"Every situation that deals with an emergency, there's always criticism. Some snarky reporter always finds something to criticize," he said.

Before holding a press conference, the Governor toured the new temporary filtration system and met with a small group of residents.

"He could have paid a little more attention to the people and really gone out and listened to more of what the people had to say," said lifelong Hoosick Falls resident Michael Hickey.

Hickey first brought concerns to village officials regarding PFOA in the water about two years ago after doing his own testing. He said he was unimpressed with Cuomo's visit.

"I appreciate the gesture, but I think the problems need to be fixed more importantly than him just showing up," Hickey said.

Hickey also questioned Cuomo's sincerity, pointing out that the governor made several jokes about the situation.

At one point, the governor said, "It's an attractive filter, it's a big filter, it looks good in gray. I don't know if they come in other colors."

In response, Hickey argued that "to be joking at this point in time, I don't think it's really needed; it's just pouring more salt into the wounds."

Though Cuomo announced that PFOA in the municipal water supply has been reduced to non-detectable levels, Hickey said he doesn't think residents will be drinking from the tap any time soon.

"There's still those questions out there and insecurity about what we really have in our water," Hickey said.

Cuomo said he expected to be back in Hoosick Falls "down the road" to check in on the situation. For now, residents are still being advised by the state Department of Health to continue using bottled water until all testing is complete.

Town of Hoosick holds meeting after governor's visit

By Rachel Yonkunas

Published: March 14, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – One day after the governor appeared in Hoosick Falls, the town of Hoosick held a board meeting to discuss the next steps of the water contamination crisis.

"I just saw pipes coming up and people going back down," Hoosick resident Karla Bascaran said.

Bascaran has had many plumbers come to her home to re-inspect her carbon filters. She said issues keep popping up, and she asked the town board if she can expect a visit with good news.

"They kept coming back, and my primary concern is will someone come to let me know it's complete?" she wondered.

Bascaran's concerns as well as the concerns of other residents were something Town Supervisor Mark Surdam mentioned to Governor Andrew Cuomo during his unexpected and last minute visit to the area on Sunday.

"[The DEC] is trying to get as many systems done as they can, and I understand that, but in the process of doing that, things are getting rushed, so mistakes are being made and people getting hired who aren't certified," he said.

But now people are shifting their eyes to farmland.

Lisa Revet, a sixth generation farmer, said some farmers are paid to be a raw sewage dumped on their land.

"We have PFOA filled septic tanks in some cases in this community," she said. "Spreading that on fields, what does that do to our soil? What's that do to our aquifers?"

Residents hope state officials are also asking the same questions so the community knows their concerns aren't being swept under the rug.

"Yeah, for peace of mind," Bascaran said.

The state is working to ensure bottled water is being delivered to residents, and a six-month water bill rebate is being given to residents who use the village water.

Hoosick Falls residents hopeful water crisis ends soon

WRGB

By Andrew Poirier

Monday, March 14th 2016

HOOSICK FALLS--Water pick up and delivery continued in Hoosick Falls Monday, one day after Governor Andrew Cuomo visited the community for the first time since the water crisis began. He told residents, the end was in sight. He said preliminary test results show the temporary filter that's been installed is working, removing PFOA from the water. He also said test results from filters on private wells, show PFOA is being removed there as well.

Residents are still being told to use bottled water, as the Department of Health continues to test water samples. Mayor David Borge said the series of water tests will look at samples from a number of different points in the water system, including inside people's homes. If the results continue to show non-detect levels of PFOA, the Mayor expects the State to tell residents the water is safe to drink and cook with again.

"We can see the finish line. It's within grasp and within a matter of days, a week maybe ten days we are going to get the go ahead to go forward," said Mayor Borge.

Residents that CBS6 News spoke with said they are hopeful the end is in sight. Others said it will take time to trust the water again.

"I think it's going to take time for people to feel comfortable with the water again. I personally will drink the water and not worry about it but everyone has their own feeling. I'm looking forward to a whole new water system," said Betty Bradley, a resident.

Mayor Borge said the village will continue to get as much information out as it can, continuing to post test results and updates from the State DOH and DEC. He also said that bottled water will be available for several more months, until the permanent water filtration system is done.

"I think it's going to take folks some time and I understand that, I really do and that's why the bottled water is going to continue to be there, at least through October. I think once people see the temporary system is working, they can see the numbers, they see more people using it, I think then people will start coming back to that," said Mayor Borge.

Gov: Honeywell International to supply bottled water in Hoosick Falls

Gov. Andrew Cuomo says filtration system makes PFOA non-detectable

03/13 2016 09:11PM

HOOSICK FALLS (WYSR-TV)

Governor Andrew Cuomo says the potentially dangerous chemical PFOA is non-detectable in the Village of Hoosick Falls water supply after a temporary filtration system was installed.

While visiting the village on Sunday, the governor still advised families to avoid using tap water until more tests are done.

But, in a deal with the state, Honeywell International is one of two companies that have agreed to deliver bottled water to residents who need help.

Up to this point, the Governor says many homeowners have been paying for water they felt was unsafe to consume.

"First of all, we have declared this site a State Superfund Site, which gives the state additional power to come in and mandate cleanup, do cleanup ourselves, and then hold the company responsible for the cost of the cleanup. We believe that the users of the water system have obviously been inconvenienced and people feel that they are paying their bill for the water system, but then they can't use the water system and that is unfair."

The New York State Health Department is expected to continue testing samples until tap water is considered safe for all uses.

According to his office, Gov. Cuomo also met with some residents to update them on the status of test results and answer questions about the state's response.

"Six months of their cost of water will be covered by the state and I believe should be covered by the company," the Governor said to reporters. "We are going to put that forth as a claim against the company."

State officials are now exploring a new permanent water source for the village.

Hundreds of homeowners are also requesting help with their well water supplies.

Well testing in North Bennington shows PFOA contamination

The Associated Press

March 14, 2016, 5:29 pm

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt. (AP) – State officials say the results from the first round of water testing in North Bennington has shown widespread contamination among residences near the former Chemfab plant.

Vermont Public Radio reports (http://bit.ly/1QY7cEQ) the state received lab results from 34 private wells on Friday.

Department of Conservation Commissioner Alyssa Schuren says 29 of the tested wells showed levels of the carcinogen PFOA that were above the standard considered acceptable by the state.

The PFOA levels in the samples ranged from 38 parts per trillion, to 2,270 parts per trillion. The Vermont Department of Health considers 20 parts per trillion to be an acceptable amount of PFOA in drinking water.

Schuren says more tests are expected to come in this week and the state will begin soil testing in the affected areas soon.

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More North Bennington Wells Show PFOA Contamination

VNPR

By Alex Keefe & Howard Weiss-Tisman

Mar 12, 2016

The Vermont Department of Health opened a PFOA information center in downtown Bennington Saturday after testing revealed widespread contamination among homes near the former Chemfab factory.

Howard Weiss-Tisman / VPR

The first round of water test results from North Bennington are in and they show widespread contamination among homes near the former Chemfab factory.

The state received lab results from 34 private wells late Friday.

Department of Conservation Commissioner Alyssa Schuren says 29 of those tests showed levels of the suspected carcinogen PFOA that were above the acceptable level set by the state.

"When we took the samples, initially we started closest to the former Chemfab facility and we worked out from there," Schuren says. "And so a lot of the initial tests we're getting

back are closest to the facility, and so one would expect these to be the highest results. Right now we're working to overlay the test results on a map, but our initial review is showing that we're seeing some of the contamination in every direction."

The PFOA levels in the samples ranged from 38 parts per trillion, to 2,270 parts per trillion.

The Vermont Department of Health considers 20 parts per trillion to be an acceptable amount of PFOA in drinking water, according to the release.

Schuren says she expects to receive more tests throughout this week, and she says the state will begin testing soil in the area as well.

Vermont environmental officials have been racing to test private water wells near the shuttered North Bennington Chemfab plant since late last month, when water tests first revealed PFOA in five private wells. The town's public drinking water supply has been tested and is not affected, the state says. PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, was used to bind protective, waterproof, or non-stick coatings and other chemicals to surfaces.

As of Saturday afternoon, the governor's office said about 185 wells had already been sampled from within a 1.5-mile radius of the former Chemfab plant, which used PFOA to affix protective coatings to cloth. The plant closed in 2002.

Officials with the state Department of Environmental Conservation were going door to door Saturday morning and making phone calls to tell residents about the results, and to answer questions, according to the release. The state will also host a community meeting to discuss the results at 6 p.m. March 16, at the Village School of North Bennington.

The state has also opened a local "information center" at the Vermont Department of Health offices, at 324 Main Street, Bennington. The center is open this weekend from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., according to the governor's office.

Meanwhile, people affected by the chemical contamination continue to receive deliveries of bottled water, paid for by Saint-Gobain, the company that owned the former Chemfab plant.

State to probe Pownal sites for PFOA

By Edward Damon

berkshireeagle.com

03/14/2016

File photo State environmental officials will test the former Warren Wire facility on Route 346 in Pownal for PFOA, DEC Commissioner Alyssa Schuren said Monday. The man-made chemical has been found in Hoosick Falls and Petersburgh, N.Y. and North Bennington.

POWNAL, VT — As state agencies work to address water contamination in North Bennington, officials are turning their attention to other locations that may be affected.

A vacant warehouse and former manufacturing facility on Route 346 in Pownal is one of those sites, according to state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Alyssa Schuren. And investigators with the EPA will also probe the former Pownal Tannery site for PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid.)

Schuren echoed Gov. Peter Shumlin who said at a community meeting last week that environmental investigators were speaking with citizens, including those who used to work in factories, to learn where PFOA may have been used.

"We have no reason to believe we'll find PFOA [in Pownal]," Schuren told the Banner Monday. "But we're doing this as an abundance of caution."

The Route 346 property, originally the site of long-defunct Warren Wire and now a vacant warehouse owned by Mack Molding, lies about 1,000 feet from a public water source — the Pownal Fire District No. 2 serves about 400 households.

The EPA will test water and sediment at Warren Wire as soon as the current owner grants site access, Schuren said.

In Hoosick Falls, N.Y., residents were told not to drink or cook with their tap water after it was found to have elevated levels of PFOA, a man-made chemical used for decades to make Teflon. In North Bennington, nearly 200 private wells have been tested within 1.5 miles of the former ChemFab facility. Of the 34 results returned this weekend, 29 showed levels of PFOA ranging from 38 to 2,270 parts per trillion (ppt).

The substance's status as an "emerging contaminant" and new science around its negative health effects means there's no federal regulation for how much PFOA is allowed for short-term exposure. The EPA's "advisory level" is 400 ppt, but has encouraged New York residents with private wells to not consume their water if levels are above 100 ppt. Vermont's limit of 20 ppt is one of the lowest in the country.

Schuren said her team has been working around the clock in North Bennington.

"It's been taking a lot of our resources as we've been really focused on the immediate response," Schuren said. "But on a parallel track, we have folks taking a look at where PFOA may have been used around the state."

Warren Wire operated at 1001 Route 346 starting in 1948. The company produced wire coated with Teflon. General Cable bought the building and 10 acre parcel in 1963. The company changed names to GK Technologies and sold the building to the current owner Mack Molding in 1988.

Mack Molding, which makes injection plastic molding, used the 123,000 square-foot building primarily as a warehouse for years before placing it up for sale in 2010. A listing on the real estate site loopnet.com states it is off-market as of Monday afternoon.

The tannery site near the Hoosic River was added to the federal Superfund program in

1999. The EPA completed a clean up of contamination from metals, semi-volatile organic compounds and dioxin in 2004 and continues to monitor water and sediment.

Schuren said if PFOA is found at other sites around Vermont, the response in those communities would be similar to that in North Bennington. In that case, residents were provided bottled water and the state began testing wells, water sources and sediment. The municipal water systems were not affected.

The state will remain the lead investigator in Pownal, Schuren said, EPA's Region 1 office in Boston, Mass. will carry out the work on her agency's behalf.

Closer to the Chemfab site, the worse the water in North Bennington

Mon, 03/14/2016

Vermont Business Magazine

Governor Peter Shumlin on Saturday announced the results of further testing for the situation in North Bennington, where a number of private wells have tested positive for elevated levels of a potentially harmful chemical known as PFOA. Twenty-nine new sites have tested above the acceptable level. The public drinking supply has been tested and is not affected.

Testing Results - The first round of well sample results were received late yesterday. The results mostly represent samples collected closer to the Chemfab plant, so it was expected that early results would show elevated PFOA levels. Of the 34 results received, 29 showed PFOA levels ranging from 38 to 2,270 parts per trillion (ppt). The Vermont Department of Health has determined 20 ppt to be an acceptable level of PFOA in drinking water. About 185 wells have been sampled in the 1.5 mile radius around the plant. As more results come in, more will be known about the extent of the contamination of private wells.

Notifying Affected Residents - The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) began notifying residents of test results this morning, going door to door to explain the results, answer questions, and coordinate installation of water treatment systems. A community meeting to review results and answer questions will be held at 6pm, Wednesday, March 16 at the Village School of North Bennington, 9 School Street, North Bennington. The Health Department is also reaching out by phone to residents who have just received test results that show their well is contaminated with PFOA.

Bottled Water & Treatment Systems - Bottled water remains available at the North Bennington Village Variety Store, located at 9 Route 67 West, and is being delivered to impacted homes. Two water tanks from which residents can draw water are located in the parking lot across from the former Chemfab plant located at the intersection of Water Street and Route 67a. Point of Entry Treatment systems are being offered to impacted residents. Conversations with municipal officials and Saint-Gobain about extending the municipal water line are ongoing.

Information Center - An information center has been set up at the Vermont Department of

Health offices located at 324 Main Street (link is external) and will be open this weekend from 9am-6pm. Officials from DEC and Health will be on hand to answer follow up questions from residents. The Information Center will be open from 8am-6pm (link is external) Monday-Friday next week (link is external).

Surface Waters & Sediment Sampled - DEC scientists have conducted sampling for PFOA in rivers, lakes and streams in the North Bennington and Bennington area, including the Walloomsac River, Paran Creek and Lake Paran. The Bennington College Campus Pond, Paran Creen onsite pond, and Hamon Road Pond were also included in the sampling. All waters are within the 1.5 mile radius of the former Chemfab facility and where private wells tested positive for chemical PFOA. Results are expected back within two to three weeks, a delay which reflects the fact that the laboratories qualified to conduct this work are at full capacity addressing tests from water wells in North Bennington, and related contamination in Hoosick Falls, New York. Follow up sampling to determine levels of PFOA in fish is planned in the coming weeks, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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