Message

From: McBay, Stephen [Mcbay.Stephen@epa.gov]
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To: McBay, Stephen [Mcbay.Stephen@epa.gov]
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REGION 2 NEWS

Insider NJ: Bateman Measure Promoting Clean Water Projects Flows Through Senate
Clean water environmental infrastructure projects will move forward with help from legislation sponsored by Senator Kip Bateman and advanced by the Senate today.

Newsday: Contaminants found in 15% of private wells near former naval weapons plant in Calverton
Perfluorinated compounds were detected in nearly 15% of private drinking wells tested near a former naval weapons plant in Calverton, a finding advocates say underscores their calls to connect residents there to the public water supply.

Queens Chronicle: In Jamaica Bay, 2nd time's not a charm
After thousands of New Yorkers signed a petition urging Gov. Cuomo to sign a bill aimed at keeping the waters of Jamaica Bay free of contamination, he vetoed it at the end of November — the second time he's pulled the plug on the proposal.

The New York Times: Biden to Pick Michael Regan, North Carolina Environment Regulator, to Head E.P.A.
WASHINGTON — President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. will nominate Michael S. Regan, secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, according to three people on the Biden transition team.

Virgin Islands Daily News: Waste Management says waste haulers paid $7.5 million so far
The V.I. Waste Management Authority on Wednesday said about half of a $15 million appropriation slated for debt-ridden contractual waste haulers has already been paid out.

Water Quality Products Magazine: ST. LAWRENCE RIVER ACQUIRES LAND TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY
More than 500 acres of land have been acquired in Alexandria, New York to protect the St. Lawrence River's water quality. The St. Lawrence River serves as a drinking water source for many communities and according to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), as shoreline development and agricultural expansion continues, the potential for water contamination increases.

WGRZ: Mayville still dealing with water issues, waiting on results from contaminant testing
MAYVILLE, N.Y. — It's been almost a week since people living in Mayville down in Chautauqua County, have been under a "do not drink" water advisory because some harmful chemicals were found in the village water supply.

NATIONAL

Agency

Federal News Network: "Evaluating EPA's protocols on returning to the office"
New York Times: "Biden to Pick Michael Regan, North Carolina Environment Regulator, to Head E.P.A."

Chemicals

Agriculture.com: EPA APPROVES KATAGON CORN HERBICIDE FOR 2021

Enforcement

Water Tech: California company to pay $390K fine for CWA violations

Land Management

AP: EPA finalizes landmark cleanup plan for the Housatonic River
US News: EPA Finalizes Landmark Cleanup Plan for the Housatonic River
Berskshire Eagle: EPA's revised final permit sticks with PCB landfill in Lee
SF Gate: EPA finalizes landmark cleanup plan for the Housatonic River

RFS

Progressive Farmer: "Small Refineries Wage RFS Waiver Battle"

Water

Orlando Sentinel: "EPA hands over wetlands permitting to Florida; Critic calls it Trump's 'parting gift' to developers"
Tampa Bay Times: "EPA agrees to let Florida oversee more wetlands development"
Southeast Ag Net: "EPA Approves Florida for Clean Water Act Section 404 Program"

Insider NJ

https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/bateman-measure-promoting-clean-water-projects-flows-senate/

Bateman Measure Promoting Clean Water Projects Flows Through Senate

December 17, 2020

Important Construction Jobs Would Benefit from NJ Infrastructure Bank Financing

Clean water environmental infrastructure projects will move forward with help from legislation sponsored by Senator Kip Bateman and advanced by the Senate today.

The legislation, S-3211, would authorize the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (NJIB) to expend additional sums to make loans for environmental infrastructure projects for Fiscal Year 2021.

"Environmental infrastructure projects like those for clean water and wastewater management are necessities," said Bateman (R-16). "These expensive undertakings could be delayed indefinitely or postponed without affordable financing from the Environmental Infrastructure Trust. This funding will help vital projects proceed, protecting the flow of clean drinking water to communities throughout the state."

Affordable loans would be available for more than 170 environmental infrastructure construction projects under Bateman's bill, which would authorize the Infrastructure Bank to expend additional sums to make low interest and market-rate loans for environmental infrastructure projects for Fiscal Year 2021.

Eligible projects include 123 from the "Storm Sandy and State Fiscal Year 2020 Clean Water Project Eligibility List" and 44 projects from the "Storm Sandy and State Fiscal Year 2020 Drinking Water Project Eligibility List."

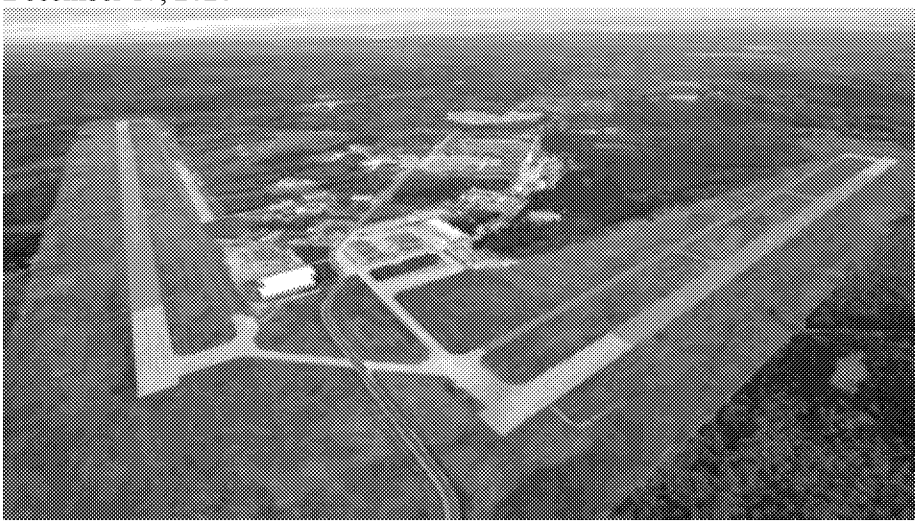
Newsday

https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/pfoa-pfas-drinking-wells-water-supply-1.50096253

Contaminants found in 15% of private wells near former naval weapons plant in Calverton

Vera Chinese

December 17, 2020



An aerial view of the site of the former Grumman airport in Calverton. Credit: Kevin P Coughlin

Perfluorinated compounds were detected in nearly 15% of private drinking wells tested near a former naval weapons plant in Calverton, a finding advocates say underscores their calls to connect residents there to the public water supply.

The Suffolk County Health Department announced in February that it would sample the private wells near the property formerly owned by the federal government and operated by Northrop Grumman Corp. until 1996.

The data was released Wednesday and shared during a virtual stakeholder meeting hosted by the Farmingdale-based Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

"There is grave reason to be concerned," said Adrienne Esposito, the group's executive director, adding the next step would be to connect residents to public water. "There's no greater holiday gift than clean water for the public."

New York State adopted a standard this past summer of 10 parts per trillion for PFOS, found in firefighting foams, and PFOA, used in nonstick and stain-resistant products. Four of the 95 wells tested by the Suffolk County Health Department in 2020 showed results above that standard, with the highest reading of PFOS at 98.5 parts per trillion. Ten wells had some detections of the compounds, but below the state standard.

PFOS and PFOA are part of a class of chemicals known as perfluorinated compounds that have been linked to reproductive, endocrine and other health impacts.

One well also exceeded the standard for toluene, a volatile organic compound that, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, can disrupt the central nervous system.

David Todd, Public Affairs Officer for NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic, said initial investigations did not indicate the contamination flowed from the Calverton site, a statement Esposito called "wishful thinking."

"We look forward to receiving the data so that we can incorporate it into the Navy's ongoing, comprehensive investigation of PFAS releases at the former NWIRP Calverton to continue to protect human health and the environment," Todd said in an email..

Environmental advocates, elected officials and residents have recommended bringing public water to the area. Public water, unlike private wells, is regularly tested and must meet standards.

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), in a letter to U.S. Navy Secretary Kenneth Braithwaite last month, urged the Navy to develop a plan to bring public water to the area and expand its investigation into toxic chemicals flowing from the facility.

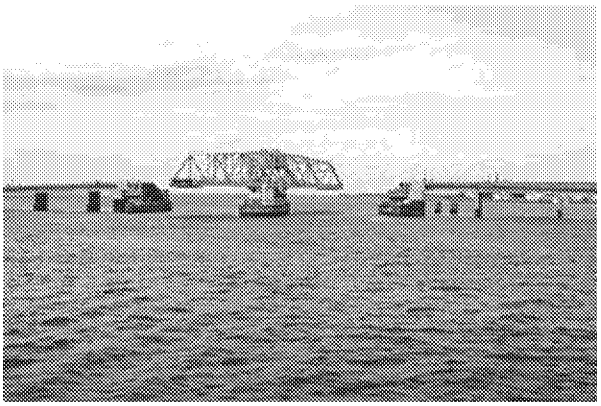
Even the Navy's own data indicates the contamination could be migrating farther off site and into private drinking wells, stakeholders have said. A map released last month of test wells and sample results taken near the property's fence line treatment facility show detections of PFAS chemicals as high as 36 times state drinking water standards.

"I don't believe the Navy has investigated the extent of the offsite contamination both far enough offsite and deep enough into the aquifer," said Stan Carey, a Calverton resident and a water service professional. "Public health has to come first."

Queens Chronicle
https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/in-jamaica-bay-2nd-time-s-not-a-charm/article_8ec0a18b-3a25-5a3a-8257-de7051559fdc.html

In Jamaica Bay, 2nd time's not a charm

Max Parrott
December 17, 2020



After thousands of New Yorkers signed a petition urging Gov. Cuomo to sign a bill aimed at keeping the waters of Jamaica Bay free of contamination, he vetoed it at the end of November — the second time he's pulled the plug on the proposal.

The bill, introduced to the Legislature by state Sen. Addabbo Jr. (D-Howard Beach) and Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato (D-Rockaway Park), has two parts. One section would end the sunset clause of a 2014 law that Addabbo sponsored preventing toxic materials from being placed in Jamaica Bay to fill pits dredged for construction. The bay has several areas that are deep enough to use as borrow pits or areas where material is either dug up for use at another site or used as a place to store excess material.

The other part would make it so that any dredged material that does enter the body of water meets the federal standard for toxic levels of contamination.

The bill passed both the Senate and Assembly in 2019 as well as this year. Addabbo previously told the Chronicle that the governor vetoed the bill in 2019 because the state Department of Environmental Conservation objected to the change in the toxicity standard. He said this year the pandemic had stopped the environmental agency from doing the work of assessing the consequences of the change in standard.

"Even though the Governor vetoed this bill again, I intend on re-introducing it next year and then continuing to negotiate with the state agencies," Addabbo said in a prepared statement. "After seeing the incredible improvement of the water quality of Jamaica Bay — with advocates saying the bay is the healthiest it has been in decades — and with the reemergence of marine wildlife to the area, Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato and I believe that the sunset clause on this bill should be removed and it should be made permanent. With such a positive impact on Jamaica Bay, we also want to make the waters even cleaner by further improving the quality of dredging materials."

"I'm looking forward to the restart of the legislative session so we can reintroduce this bill, and work with Senator Addabbo and the Governor's office to finally get this through the finish line," said Pheffer Amato, the Assembly sponsor of the bill.

Dan Mundy Jr., president of the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, has said that the federal contamination standard eliminates certain levels of metals or toxic chemicals that could enter the ecosystem through the bottom of the food chain. He worried that the state standard does not go far enough.

"Governor Cuomo needs to reverse his ill-advised position on this bill and lead the way to protect our only urban national park," said Mundy.

The New York Times
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/climate/michael-regan-epa.html

NYT: Biden to Pick Michael Regan, North Carolina Environment Regulator, to Head E.P.A.

Lisa Friedman

December 17, 2020

WASHINGTON — President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. will nominate Michael S. Regan, secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, according to three people on the Biden transition team.

Mr. Regan became Mr. Biden's top choice only in recent days, two people familiar with the selection process said. The front-runner had for several weeks been Mary D. Nichols, California's air quality regulator, but she faced significant criticism from liberal groups who accused her of not doing enough to address issues of environmental racism in her state. Mr. Biden also has been under pressure to make his cabinet choices more racially diverse. If confirmed, Mr. Regan is expected to bring a strong focus on racial equity to the agency.

"It signals that the Biden administration is serious about getting the E.P.A. back to its core mission to protect the environment and public health as well as ensure strong, meaningful steps are taken to advance environmental justice issues," said Brian Buzby, the executive director of the North Carolina Conservation Network, a coalition of environmental groups.

Mr. Biden has vowed to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and along the way eliminate fossil fuel emissions from the power sector by 2035. If the Senate remains under Republican control and resistant to passing climate legislation, it will fall largely to the E.P.A. to enact regulations that can curb planet-warming pollution from power plants, automobiles and oil and gas sites.

A longtime air quality specialist at the E.P.A. working under both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, Mr. Regan later worked for the Environmental Defense Fund, a nonprofit advocacy group. In 2017, Roy Cooper, a Democrat, defeated Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican, in North Carolina and tapped Mr. Regan to lead the state environmental agency.

There he replaced Donald R. van der Vaart, a Trump administration ally who has questioned the established science of climate change and fought Obama-era rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and championed a pro-business agenda of deregulation in North Carolina.

Supporters of Mr. Regan said he improved low morale and emphasized the role of science at the department. Several called it an obvious parallel to what he would be expected to do at E.P.A. where Andrew Wheeler, President Trump's administrator and a former coal lobbyist, has discouraged the agency from working on climate change, and independent auditors have identified a "culture at the top" of political interference in science.

"It's eerie how it has mirrored what happened to E.P.A.," said Dan Crawford, director of government relations at the North Carolina League of Conservation Voters who called the choice of Mr. Regan to lead the federal agency "refreshing."

Mr. van der Vaart in an interview called Mr. Regan a "nice guy" but said the Department of Environmental Quality under his leadership had made poor decisions, including in a settlement with Duke Energy over the clean up of coal ash that he argued could lead to rate hikes for customers.

He pushed back on the notion that morale took a hit under his leadership. Regarding climate change policy, Mr. van der Vaart said, under Mr. Regan's leadership "precious little has been done in any event so I'm not sure where the improvement was specifically on that issue."

The selection of Mr. Regan is in many ways a conventional choice. Democratic presidents have a history of poaching E.P.A. leaders from state environmental agencies. Both Gina McCarthy and Lisa Jackson, who both ran the agency under President Obama, had been the heads of state environmental agencies; Ms. McCarthy in Massachusetts and Ms. Jackson in New Jersey.

But Mr. Regan's name only first surfaced on Sunday after weeks of speculation that Ms. Nichols of California had a lock on the job.

Ms. Nichols, a champion of aggressive regulation, would have faced fierce opposition from Republicans, something for which the Biden team was prepared. But, several people close to the transition said, Mr. Biden was caught off guard by intense criticism of Ms. Nichols from liberals who argued that the cap-and-trade policies she helped design for California allowed industry to continue to pollute, disproportionately harming poor communities.

In Mr. Regan, people close to the Biden transition said, the president-elect hopes to find a candidate who has not made many enemies on the left or the right and who can also move quickly to map out an aggressive agenda.

He has been a key figure in helping Governor Cooper carry out his pledge to achieve carbon neutrality in North Carolina by 2050, and oversees the state's climate change interagency council, a working group of state agencies set up to meet

that goal. In September, Mr. Regan outlined a plan that included cutting the power sector's emissions to 70 percent below 2005 levels in the next decade and significantly ramping up clean energy development.

And, in January, Mr. Regan's agency struck a far-reaching settlement agreement with Duke Energy and environmental groups to require the utility to dispose of more than 76 million tons of submerged coal ash in lined landfills. It will be the nation's largest coal ash excavation.

Coral Davenport contributed reporting.

Virgin Islands Daily News
http://www.virginislandsdailynews.com/news/waste-management-says-waste-haulers-paid-7-5-million-so-far/article_4e5a09c2-9913-5d62-abe1-4fcc91c07fcb.html#mcms-source=login

Waste Management says waste haulers paid $7.5 million so far

A.J. Rao

December 17, 2020

The V.I. Waste Management Authority on Wednesday said about half of a $15 million appropriation slated for debt-ridden contractual waste haulers has already been paid out.

Waste Management Authority Executive Director Roger Merritt Jr., who appeared at the agency's monthly board meeting, said invoices were collected from haulers and submitted to the V.I. Office of Management and Budget for review, as per Act 8381, which called for the $15 million appropriation.

The first batch of invoices was submitted on Nov. 24 and yielded $7,578,903. The monies will go toward A9 Trucking; Bates Trucking and Trash Removal; Joshua's Trucking, Just Right, Marco St. Croix, Oasis Consulting, Sleepy's Trucking and V.I. Recycling.

Merritt on Wednesday did not provide a breakdown of how much each contractor will receive. However, he noted that the Waste Management Authority will provide a final report to the Legislature — upon depletion of the $15 million — that will include this information.

A second submission of invoices was made on Dec. 1 and is expected to yield $3,786,303. A third submission on Dec. 8 is expected to yield $1,856,189. The monies have yet to be approved by OMB but Merritt foresaw approval "in the next week or so."

"Year-to-date, we have submitted a total of $13,221,395 [in invoices] to the OMB out of the $15 million appropriation," Merritt said.

The payout, as mandated by Act 8381, is an attempt to relieve the heavy financial burden on contractual waste haulers who, particularly after hurricanes Irma and Maria, performed services with little or no pay.

While the government's debt to solid waste service providers has been estimated to be as high as $30 million, the exact figure has been difficult to pin down, according to Waste Management Authority Board Chairman Keith Richards.

In September, V.I. lawmakers brought forward a bill that set aside $15 million for the Waste Management Authority to pay its outstanding debt and prevent work stoppages by haulers.

Since Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. signed the legislation into law in late October, "almost every solid waste service provider who performed services since the Authority's inception has contacted our Solid Waste or Finance division and made some claim of outstanding accounts payable owed to their company," Waste Management Authority spokeswoman Melody Rames said in a recent news release.

Within 10 days of the law's passage, the Waste Management Authority was required to compile a list of all contractors who were owed payment, and the amount of that debt, and submit it to the OMB.

Merritt said validating invoices has long been a rigorous process for the Waste Management Authority because some contractors provide inaccurate information or don't have a proper accounting apparatus to provide invoices at all.

Going forward, Merritt said he intends to ensure the collection and validation of invoices will be a smoother process.

"We are putting in a process where once we receive an invoice, we validate the invoice within a certain time period," he said. "And if we have any questions, we'll talk to the contractor in a relatively quick time period so we don't have invoices that are lingering."

Water Quality Products Magazine
https://www.wqpmag.com/drinking-water/st-lawrence-river-acquires-land-protect-water-quality

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER ACQUIRES LAND TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

CRISTINA TUSER

December 17, 2020

More than 500 acres of land have been acquired in Alexandria, New York to protect the St. Lawrence River's water quality.

The St. Lawrence River serves as a drinking water source for many communities and according to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), as shoreline development and agricultural expansion continues, the potential for water contamination increases.

According to the state DEC and the Thousand Islands Land Trust, TILT's acquisition of 527 acres is part of the Crooked Creek Preserve Water Quality Initiative, reported WWNY-TV.

The acquisition intends to protect the surface water quality of the St. Lawrence River.

TILT acquired the parcels with New York State Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) funding.

Water quality in Goose Bay has declined over time due to eutrophication. The excess nutrients are causing plant life to grow densely and is causing death of animal life from lack of oxygen. Aquatic invasive species are also growing in the bay adjacent to Kring Point State Park.

To mitigate issues with the source waters, New York State awarded a $225,360 WQIP grant to TILT to support the acquisition, reported WWNY-TV.

The acquisition includes more than 150 acres of wetlands and 5,000 feet of frontage along Crooked Creek in the town of Alexandria.

The acquired properties are:

- A 319-acre Broudy property on Goose Bay, with about 100 acres of coastal wetlands and about two miles of undeveloped road frontage.
- The approximately 27-acre Weisberg property, which has mature forested habitat adjacent to the north Goose Bay wetland complex.
- And the Wilton parcel, which is approximately 182 acres and features 50 acres of New York State DEC Class 1 wetland.

WGRZ

https://www.wgrz.com/article/tech/science/environment/village-of-mayville-dealing-with-water-issues-waiting-on-contaminant-testing-results/71-d04bcd13-90c4-47a1-8b4c-4e5756920929

Mayville still dealing with water issues, waiting on results from contaminant testing

Rob Hackford

December 17, 2020

MAYVILLE, N.Y. — It's been almost a week since people living in Mayvill,e down in Chautauqua County, have been under a "do not drink" water advisory because some harmful chemicals were found in the village water supply.

Mayville Mayor Ken Shearer told 2 On Your Side the weeklong water issue could be resolved as soon as Monday, but he added New York State Department of Environmental Conservation involvement is just beginning.

Neither the village, the county, or the state knows where the chemical PFNA came from.

In fact, Mayville only started testing for the contaminate in question, Perfluorononanoic acid, a few weeks ago, Shearer said.

It's listed as an emerging chemical that the state DEC is concerned could cause lasting health problems. Found in carpet and non-stick cookware the chemical is used for stain resistance.

"We're not actually out of compliance because it's not a regulated chemical until 2021, so we're right at the beginning of this," Shearer said.

New drinking water standards passed back in August set limits for PFNA and other similar chemicals called PFAs at 10 parts per trillion. Mayville's three wells registered between 77 and 330 parts per trillion a few weeks ago, hence the order.

Shearer said the state DEC started its search for a source on Wednesday.

"It will be ongoing, I'm sure, for some time before we have some real answers, but they're starting, Shearer said, adding, "they're trying to figure out where it came from, what's the best action to get rid of it, and what the best action is going forward."

Mayville Public Works Superintendent John Buxton told 2 On Your Side the village has taken action and flushed storage tanks and water lines multiple times, in an attempt to clear out the chemical. A newly drilled well should also provide contaminant-free water, he said on a phone call.

For the past week, neighbors have been picking up bottles at the Tops location on South Erie Street and the village office. While the water is not safe to consume (drink or use in cooking), it can be used for bathing and other tasks.

"The residents here are resilient. They've been more than happy to see us handing out water, they're getting through it, and I'm sure we'll all get through this together," Shearer said.

He added that testing in the next couple of days will be crucial. Water samples are sent to a lab in Albany, and results usually come back within 24 and 48 hours Shearer said.

When this problem initially came up, Shearer said the village was told a fix could take between two weeks and three months. Fortunately for everyone in Mayville, the first option appears more likely.

When asked about how the new regulations could impact other villages, towns, and cities across the state, Shearer added.

"I don't know, of course, a crystal ball I don't have, I'm sure we won't be the last. Given that this is going to be a regulated chemical in the coming year I think you'll see more and more of this," Shearer said.

Stephen McBay
Public Information Officer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Public Affairs Office
290 Broadway – 26th Floor
New York, NY 10007
(212) 637-3672

mcbay.stephen@epa.gov