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HORSHAM WATER AND
SEWER AUTHORITY

DEP takes public comment on Cross Keys PFAS action

By Chris Ullery

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DEP officials will provide a brief PFAS investigation update Monday and present its interim response plan for at least four Doylestown Township homes still receiving bottled water.

An ongoing investigation into the source of drinking water contamination in the Doylestown area continues with an update and public hearing at Lenape Middle School at 6:30 Monday evening.

The state Department of Environmental Protection's hearing at 313 W. State St. in Doylestown Township begins with an update on the state's search for the source of chemicals known as PFAS contaminating wells in the Cross Keys area.

The DEP will also take comment and testimony on its "proposed response action" interim plan to install "Whole-House Filtration Systems" for at least four homes still receiving bottled water, a department news release states.

A public drinking water well near the Cross Keys Shopping Center at state routes 313 and 611 was shut down in 2016 after levels of perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorooctanoic acid over the 70 parts per trillion federal health advisory limit were found in the water.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency set the limit in May 2016, resulting in 22 public drinking wells and at least 200 private wells being shuttered in multiple towns across Bucks and eastern Montgomery counties.

The DEP began testing samples from more than 350 area properties within a mile of the area now designated as the Easton Road PFC Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act Site soon after the authority notified the state of the well results.

While contamination in towns like Warminster, Warrington and Horsham were linked to firefighting foams at nearby military bases, the potential source of the Cross Keys contamination is still under investigation by the DEP.

Private wells at eight Doylestown Township homes tested above the federal limit, and DEP began supplying the homes with bottled water after March 2018.

Four of those homes have since installed their own filtration systems, but the DEP has proposed installing similar “point of entry treatment systems” for the remaining homes as part of its ongoing interim response.

Documents in the administrative record available through dep.pa.gov show the state considered three other remediation options, including continuing bottled water delivery.

An analysis of the four options online states installing filtration systems is both cost effective and could become part of a final alternative in the future.

Next week’s hearing is part of an open public comment period that began earlier this month and continues through Jan. 17.

Residents will have up to three minutes to provide comment on the proposed remediation actions during Monday’s hearing, and time may not be given to others, a DEP new release states.

Organizations wishing to speak are asked to designate one spokesperson to speak on their behalf, the release adds.

Written public comments can be mailed to Josh Crooks, project officer at DEP, at jocrooks@pa.gov or mailed to 2 E. Main St., Norristown, PA 19401.

Emailed comments should include “Easton Road PFC HSCA Site Administrative Record Comments” in the subject line.