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## New Horsham PFAS Remediation Authority gets to work

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State Rep. Todd Stephens, Horsham Council President Greg Nesbitt, Gov. Tom Wolf, and Horsham councilmen Mark McCouch and William Whiteside pose for a group photo outside a formerly contaminated well in Horsham on Thursday, Aug. 22 2019.

Dan Sokil - MediaNews Group

A new organization meant to tackle issues related to underground contamination at and around local military bases is taking action.

Rep. Todd Stephens (R-151st), who has been named chairman of the newly formed Military Installation Remediation and Infrastructure Authority, said the authority is hitting the ground running.

"We have several important deadlines to meet over the next few months, so we'll be moving at a robust pace," Stephens said.

"Thankfully, Horsham Township immediately took the steps necessary to create the new Military Installation Remediation and Infrastructure Authority and has dedicated significant time and resources to the new authority," he said.

Stephens's legislation, House Bill 1410, now Act 101 of 2019, allows the new authority to use a portion of state tax revenue generated on and around the former Willow Grove Naval Air Station to eliminate the local surcharges ratepayers have been paying for clean water and to remediate water contamination caused by former military installations. This was the first bill enacted in Pennsylvania to provide dedicated funding to eliminate PFAS from drinking water.

In 2006, the federal government closed several military bases around the country, including the Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Montgomery County. In transferring the land, the federal government discovered significant environmental issues, including contamination of the drinking water in some Montgomery County and Bucks County communities caused by firefighting foam at the military installation.

Faced with insufficient federal action, local governments had no choice but to impose surcharges on ratepayers to fund cleanup efforts. Stephens crafted Act 101 of 2019 to reclaim those surcharges and address unmet remediation needs in local communities.

Stephens thanked his colleagues Reps. Meghan Schroeder (R-Bucks), Todd Polinchock (R-29), Tom Murt (R-152), and Ben Sanchez (R-153); Sens. Maria Collett (D-12th) and Bob Mensch (R-24) for helping pass his bill; and Governor Tom Wolf for signing the bill into law.

"Despite the amount of time it took for this idea to become a reality, the real work is just beginning," Stephens said.

"We have a great team assembled here and are building the foundation of a program that will last 30 years. We will be working together with water providers and local governments to ensure that families and future generations in our communities have safe, clean drinking water."

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