

# Water authorities get \$2.6M for PFAS

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Three area water providers are getting over \$2.6 million in state funding that is expected to be used to reimburse ratepayers in Warminster, Warrington and Horsham.

The Military Installation Remediation and Infrastructure Authority awarded the grants Friday morning with the money expected to be passed along to water customers who have shouldered increased costs for the past four years to remediate the systems.

"These funds will help fulfill the promise to local water customers who paid surcharges to water utilities to offset the costs of cleaning the PFAS from water systems," Rep. Todd Stephens, R-151, said Friday.

Horsham Water & Sewer Authority was awarded \$1.4 million; the Warminster Municipal Authority is receiving \$500,000; and the North Wales Water Authority will get \$742,691.

North Wales purchased Warrington's water infrastructure last year, but the authority

has been fully supplying the township with public drinking water for most of the past four years.

Decades of firefighting foam used at nearby former and active military bases led to many public and private drinking water wells in the three communities testing for PFAS and being shuttered in May 2016.

The Environmental Protection Agency had recently set a lifetime health advisory limit of 70 parts per trillion of the unregulated chemicals known as PFAS in drinking water.

Local, state and federal officials have been working toward a settlement with the military to ultimately pay for remediation efforts, but residents have been paying the upfront costs for years.

Those costs usually take the form of higher water rates as area water utilities worked to provide water with no detectable levels of the PFAS.

Stephens, a Horsham resident and current chair of the MIRIA board, introduced the legislation that would later become Act 101 of 2019



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**More than \$2.6 million will go to reimbursing area ratepayers who have had to foot the bill for water remediation linked to the use of fire fighting foams at nearby former and active military bases. The chemicals known as PFAS are believed to be a carcinogen and left hundreds of drinking water wells shuttered in the area in 2016. [FILE]**

establishing the grant program.

Larry Burns, treasure of the board, said Friday's grant awards were one of two grant allocations to be issued this year.

Friday's awards were part of the Quick Response Grant program devised to get some form of payment to ratepayers quickly, while a larger grant program will likely see

more awards at the end of this year.

"Both are for the same purposes, but the Quick Response Grants expedites funding for surcharge reimbursement, impacted well connections or other eligible purposes," Burns said in an email Friday.

State Rep. Meghan Schroder, R-29, of Buckingham, applauded the

work done by the board, which formed just before the coronavirus pandemic disrupted life for many in the commonwealth.

"I am proud to have voted for the creation of and supported the MIRIA, and I thank the members who serve on the board for their hard work," Schroder said in Friday news release.