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Dear Livingston Water Customers,

You recently received a regulatory notice informing you that the Livingston Township Water Department has detected levels of PFOA (perfluorooctanic acid) above the recently enacted New Jersey drinking water standard of 14 parts per trillion in several of our wells from which water enters our system. As a regulated water utility, our Water Department was required to send the notice in the form in which it was delivered. I am writing now to offer some context regarding the information in the notice and to explain the steps we are taking to isolate, mitigate and reduce the level of PFOA in the affected locations to bring our drinking water into compliance with New Jersey's drinking water standard.

The primary question at the top of everyone's mind is: Can we continue to drink and use the water given the measured levels of PFOA? I can tell you without question that I personally have no hesitation drinking or otherwise using the water myself, or having friends and coworkers in town hall do the same. The experts most familiar with our water system are of the same view. If we felt otherwise, you would know it. Similarly, if environmental regulators felt the level of PFOA or any other contaminant justified more drastic action, that notice would be conveyed to you in a much different fashion.

PFOA is prevalent throughout the environment and has been found in the blood serum of 98% of the U.S. population. While the precise human health effects from exposure to low levels of PFOA are unknown and will require additional study, the concern is generally with higher exposure levels and the potential effects of long-term or lifetime accumulations from multiple sources. That said, New Jersey has adopted a stringent new rule to begin reducing the amount of PFOA in the environment. As a result, we are taking steps to support that objective and want you to be informed every step of the way. The current health advisories for PFOA in drinking water are focused on ingestion (drinking water or using it in food preparation) – not skin contact or other exposures, such as washing dishes, doing laundry or watering your lawn.

Please note that some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. In the case of PFOA specifically, if you are pregnant, nursing or providing an infant with formula that requires adding water, regulatory authorities recommend you seek advice regarding PFOA in drinking water from your health care providers.

I encourage you to carefully review the regulatory notices sent by the Township and the fact sheets on PFOA published by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Copies of these materials are available at

livingstonnj.org/PFOA. That page also includes answers to frequently asked questions, which I am confident you will find helpful. Some highlights from this information are summarized below:

- Until this year, PFOA was an unregulated contaminant, meaning neither the EPA nor the NJDEP regulated it in drinking water. In 2016, the EPA issued a "lifetime health advisory" for PFOA in drinking water, setting that advisory level at 70 parts per trillion (ppt), and that remains in effect. In other words, 70 ppt is the concentration of PFOA in drinking water at which the EPA concluded adverse health effects are not anticipated to occur over a lifetime. In 2019, the Livingston Township Water Department began monitoring for PFOA and reporting those results to you in its Annual Drinking Water Quality Report. PFOA was detected in 2019 and 2020, but those results were well under the EPA's health advisory level.
- Effective in 2021, the NJDEP began regulating PFOA in drinking water, and set its maximum contaminant level for PFOA at 14 parts per trillion (ppt), applied on the basis of a "Running Annual Average" (RAA). New Jersey is one of the first states to regulate PFOA, and its standard is much more stringent than the EPA's advisory standard. Based on our quarterly sampling, the running annual average at Well 4 is 23 ng/L, Well 8 is 16 ng/L, Well 10 is 22 ng/L and Well 11 is 19 ng/L, exceeding the newly-established NJ regulatory limit by between 2 and 9 parts per trillion, but still well below the EPA's advisory standard of 70 ppt. To help you visualize what these "parts per trillion" measurements mean, one ppt is equivalent to 4/1000^{ths} of a single drop in the average home's total usage of approximately 73,000 gallons per year. Put another way, 1 ppt is equivalent to 1 second out of 32,000 years.
- The manufacture and use of PFOA has been significantly curtailed in the U.S in the last 15 years, but given its extensive use in consumer products and industrial processes since the 1940's and its pervasiveness (i.e., it doesn't break down), it can be found throughout the environment all over the world, including in many drinking water systems across New Jersey and the United States.

We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water, and we are taking both short- and long-term actions to reduce the concentration of PFOA and bring the affected wells to within the NJ standard. To accomplish this:

- We will be expanding our existing well facilities at six sites to treat PFOA, using granulated activated carbon granules and/or ion exchange resins. Both technologies have been approved by the NJDEP for the effective removal of PFOA from water. Our experts have completed a feasibility study for this work, and are in the process of refining the design and confirming the timeline and cost. Our goal is to expedite construction, but the timing is subject to NJDEP approvals. Timing is also subject to the availability of specialized labor and materials, supplies of which are in high demand given the large number of water systems in New Jersey that need to build similar treatment systems in response to the new regulation.

- In the interim, we are confirming the steps we can take to most effectively reduce concentrations of PFOA before these large new treatment facilities are constructed. We have temporarily stopped drawing water from the well with the highest concentration of PFOA. We may temporarily close other wells as our Township water demands decrease seasonally, and we are also utilizing supplemental water sources. Our water system is comprised of a single interconnected series of water mains, so that all water produced is effectively blended with all the other water, with PFAS concentrations dependent on the location of the different wells and service lines.
- If you have installed, or are considering purchasing, a residential (or point of use) water treatment system to address PFOA and PFOS, several of which are on the market, please see the “Frequently Asked Questions” section of our PFOA website page, where you will see some guidance on this topic.

As noted above, please review all of the materials available at livingstonnj.org/PFOA including the NJDEP and EPA fact sheets and our answers to frequently asked questions. The site will be updated periodically as construction timelines are finalized and as new information becomes available.

The Livingston Township Water Department has been providing water for over a hundred years. We work hard to protect our natural resources and deliver the best quality water to every tap, and we are committed to ensuring that your drinking water continues to be the best water source for you and your family.

Sincerely,



Barry R. Lewis, Jr.
Township Manager
Township of Livingston, NJ