



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



MELANIE LOYZIM
COMMISSIONER

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

March 13, 2024

Kevin Sutherland, Town Manager
PO Box 386
Newcastle ME 04553

Re: Investigation of PFAS in Maine in Newcastle

Dear Kevin,

As a follow-up to to my call with Emma this morning, this letter is to inform you that the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is initiating an investigation into the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from the land application of sludge in Newcastle. This is part of the DEP’s statewide investigation for the implementation of [2021 Public Law Chapter 478, An Act To Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater](#), effective October 18, 2021.

The purpose of DEP’s investigation is to identify sites statewide that are impacted by PFAS, identify drinking water supplies that are impacted above Maine’s Interim Drinking Water Standard for PFAS, and provide impacted individuals with water that is below the standard.

Sludge application sites have been identified based on DEP licensing information. To designate the approximate schedule for sampling, the DEP prioritized all sludge sites across the state into four Tiers (I, II, III, IV) based upon the following criteria:

- The anticipated presence of high levels of PFAS in sludge applied at a location;
- The volume of sludge applied at a location; and/or
- The proximity of a site to drinking water supplies.

The investigation of Tier I sites began in December 2021. In August 2022, DEP began investigating Tier II sites. DEP has now begun researching and investigating Tier III sites. We anticipate this process will continue into 2024 and 2025. Please keep in mind that a site may include several physical locations and may also cross district, town, and county boundaries.

The DEP is working closely with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) to identify sites with historical sludge application which are currently being used for the production of agricultural products. As a first step, DEP and DACF will work to verify application history and locations of spreading and stockpiles. DEP and DACF staff may

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Investigation of PFAS in Maine

reach out to municipalities to gather information that will help in our investigation. DEP will request permission to sample soils and groundwater from properties where sludge may have been

land applied. DEP will also request permission to sample and test drinking water supplies from individual homeowners in the direct vicinity of the site(s) for certain PFAS.

DEP will share the sample results with DACF who may recommend modifications to farming practices based on a careful review of the data. DACF may also recommend additional sampling, including the testing of feed and other on-farm products, and the testing of additional soils to gain insight into any potential impacts that PFAS may have at farms.

PFAS are considered emerging contaminants and are not currently regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). In Maine however, emergency legislation became effective June 21, 2021, setting forth an interim drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion for the sum of six PFAS (PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFDA). This is described in [Resolve 2021, Chapter 82, Resolve, To Protect Consumers of Public Drinking Water by Establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for Certain Substances and Contaminants.](#)

We understand that you may have questions and concerns regarding our investigation. General questions about the investigation by DEP or that are being conveyed to you through your constituents should be directed to David Madore, Deputy Commissioner and Communications Director, David.Madore@maine.gov, 207-287-5842. You can also visit our webpage located at: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/index.html>. This webpage is updated as more information is made available.

If you have agricultural-related questions, please contact the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, pfas.dacf@maine.gov, 207-287-4514. Thank you for your assistance in this important investigation.

Sincerely,



James C. Pollock
Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management
Phone: (207) 592-8343

eCopy: Tracy Kelly, DEP