

DNR: Announces results of Madison PFAS contamination pilot study

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MADISON, Wis. – A pilot study commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources reveals the possibility of additional sources of PFAS contamination near two Madison drinking water wells.

In April, the DNR hired an environmental consulting firm to inventory current, former industrial and commercial activities to help determine potential sources of PFAS affecting the two wells.

Madison municipal Wells 15 and 16 were chosen for this pilot study because voluntary sampling events that occurred in late 2018 by the Madison water utility confirmed that the wells are affected by PFAS. Well 15 helps serve the city's northeast side, and Well 16 provides water to part of Madison's west side.

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a group of human-made chemicals used for decades in numerous products including non-stick cookware, fast food wrappers, stain-resistant sprays, and certain types of firefighting foam.

These legacy contaminants have made their way into the environment through accidental spills of PFAS-containing materials, discharges of PFAS-containing wastewater to treatment plants and certain types of firefighting foams.

The pilot study showed that, in addition to known PFAS sources, there could be additional sources around Wells 15 and 16 that require further evaluation.

“Clean drinking water is a public health priority. This pilot project serves as an example of the department’s efforts to raise water quality issues to the forefront and assist Madison in its mission to provide safe, reliable water to the community,” said DNR Secretary-designee Preston Cole. “The department remains committed to working collaboratively with the city, county, water utility and sewage district.”

The next steps include taking groundwater samples from existing monitoring wells to identify other potential sources of PFAS. DNR and local officials will evaluate the results and methodology of the pilot study to help with evaluations in Dane County and other locations around the state where PFAS contamination may exist.

Visit the DNR website for more information about the pilot study and PFAS. You may also visit the DNR’s website at dnr.wi.gov and type in keyword “[PFAS](#).”