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HORSHAM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL STAYS ON TOP OF ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

The health and safety of Horsham residents is the highest priority of Horsham Township Council. Horsham Council is staying on top of the environmental situation within the Township with proactive leadership focused on insuring residents are safe.

“On behalf of Horsham Township Council, protecting the health and safety of both our residents and business community is our number one priority. We ask that the Federal Government put the PFC study as their highest priority to determine any risk there are to our residents and what can be done to minimize health risk to our current and future residents.” says Deborah Tustin, Horsham Township Council President. She, along with her fellow Council members, have fully supported the efforts of the U.S. Navy and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard to investigate and cleanup any impacts that past operations at the former Naval Air Station – Joint Reserve Base, Willow Grove have had on the environment.

The discovery of perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) in the groundwater on and adjacent to the former base resulted in immediate actions by the Horsham Water and Sewer Authority (HWSA). Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) are organic chemicals used in a variety of products such as fabric, carpets, non-stick cookware, floor wax, the lining of microwave popcorn bags and firefighting foam. The US Navy actively used the firefighting foam at NAS-JRB Willow Grove for training purposes. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified PFCs as ‘emerging contaminants’ in a continuing program to insure the region’s drinking water remains safe. The Navy has been investigating the environment at the base since the early 1990’s with the encouragement and support of Horsham Township Council. Horsham Township has opened up the Horsham Township Library and Community

Center to host a series of public meetings of the NAS-JRB Willow Grove Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The most recent RAB meeting in December 2015 was the 59th meeting of that group.

Even though the EPA has only issued Provisionary Health Advisory Levels (PHAL) without specific clean up guidelines for PFCs, the HWSA (in conjunction with Horsham Township) immediately shut down two main water supply wells and began an on-going testing program to insure the water they provide to residents and businesses in the Township met drinking water standards. The HWSA is working closely with the Navy and the U.S. EPA to identify those residents and businesses near the base that have private wells. Currently the HWSA is working on connecting homes and businesses whose wells have shown evidence of PFCs at or above the PHAL into the HWSA public water supply system. The Navy is funding HWSA's costs for those connections as well as for the installation of granular activated carbon filters on the contaminated public water supply wells. Additionally, the Navy is compensating HWSA for the costs of purchased water from neighboring water suppliers.

Local, state and federal agencies have attempted to keep the public aware of both the environmental issues being addressed and possible health impacts. Horsham Township Council and staff have coordinated and attended a number of public meetings on the PFC contamination situation. The next Navy/EPA public meeting/open house is tentatively set for May 24-25, 2016 at the Horsham Community Center. Representatives from U.S. Navy, PA Air National Guard, U.S. EPA, PADEP, local water authorities, Montgomery and Bucks County Health Departments and the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are scheduled to attend.

"The Navy has stepped forward and is addressing the potential environmental issues with both money and actions", says William Walker, Horsham Township Manager. He noted that the Navy and Air National Guard have on-going investigations to determine the nature and extent of the PFC contamination. Additional monitoring wells are being installed with sampling scheduled in early spring 2016. Soil and sediment sampling is also scheduled as part of the comprehensive investigation. All of the sampling is being done in concert with the U.S. EPA and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP).

Mrs. Tustin encourages Horsham Township residents and businesses to stay informed on these issues by:

- Checking the Horsham Township website (www.horsham.org) and the HWSA website (www.horshamwater-sewer.com) for the latest information

- Become better informed by reviewing environmental information relating to PFCs and the NAS-JRB Willow Grove. The Navy maintains a website administrative records and environmental documents (http://bracpmo.navy.mil/brac_bases/northeast/reserve_base_willow_grove.html). Paper copies of these reports are available at the Horsham Township Library.
- Sign up for Horsham Township and Horsham Land Redevelopment Authority news alerts (www.horsham.org and www.hlra.org)
- Attend the upcoming public meeting/open (May 24-25, 2016)

For additional information, contact Mr. William Walker, Horsham Township Manager (215.643.3131)