The St. Clair Water and Sewer Authority wishes to inform water system customers that very low levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) were detected in three samples collected on March 8, 2018 from the raw surface water and at the water plant’s finished water. The results are summarized in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date**  **Collected** | **Sampling Location** | **PFOS + PFOA (ppt)** | **LHA (ppt)** | **Total of Detectable PFAS (ppt)** |
| 3/8/2018 | Drinking Water Tap(1) | 1.92 J | 70 | 5.41 J |
| 3/8/2018 | Drinking Water Tap(2) | 2.29 J | 70 | 6.31 J |
| 3/8/2018 | Surface Water Raw(2) | 2.76 J | 70 | 10.03 J |

J – The amount detected is below the Reporting Limit/Level of Quantification (LoQ) and should be considered estimated. If individual PFAS compounds were also detected below the LoQ, the sum or total is also considered estimated.  
ND – The parameter was not detected based on the laboratory’s analytical report

(1) -- EPA Method 537

(2) – Isotope Dilution

**What are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and why are they harmful?**

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), sometimes called PFCs, are a class of man-made organic chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil. PFAS have been classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an emerging contaminant on the national landscape. For decades, they have been used in many industrial applications and consumer products such as carpeting, waterproof clothing, upholstery, food paper wrappings, fire-fighting foams, and metal plating. They are still used today. PFAS have been found at low levels both in the environment and in blood samples of the general U.S. population.

These chemicals are persistent, which means they do not break down in the environment. They also bioaccumulate, meaning the amount builds up over time in the blood and organs. Studies in people who were exposed to PFAS over prolonged periods found links between the chemicals and increased cholesterol, changes in the body’s hormones and immune system, decreased fertility, and increased risk of certain cancers.

**Why are public water supplies being sampled?**

The DEQ has established a program to test all Community Water Supplies (CWS) with their own source and all schools classified as Non-Community Public Water Systems (NCWS) for the presence of PFAS. The DEQ is carrying out this project as a proactive measure to identify where PFAS compounds occur and determine actions necessary to protect public health.

**Are there health advisory levels?**

The EPA has not established enforceable drinking water standards, called maximum contaminant levels, for these chemicals. However, EPA has set a Lifetime Health Advisory (LHA) level in drinking water for two PFAS: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). The PFOA and PFOS LHA is the level, or amount, ***below which no harm is expected from these chemicals***. The LHA level is 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and 70 ppt for PFOS. If both PFOA and PFOS are present, the LHA is 70 ppt for the combined concentration.

The amount of PFOA and PFOS combined in the sample collected from the St. Clair Water and Sewer Authority drinking water using EPA Method 537 was 1.92 ppt, which is much lower than the 70 ppt LHA for the combination of these two chemicals. There are many other PFAS compounds that currently do not have LHA levels. For information on PFOA, PFOS and other PFAS, including possible health outcomes, you may visit these websites:

* **State of Michigan PFAS Action Response Team** (MPART) webpage serving as the main resource for public information on PFAS contamination in Michigan  
  [www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse](http://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse)
* **United States Environmental Protection Agency** (US EPA) webpage including basic information, US EPA actions, and links to informational resources  
  [www.epa.gov/pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas)
* **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry** (ASTDR) webpage including health information, exposure, and links to additional resources   
  [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas)

**How can PFAS affect people’s health?**

Some scientific studies suggest that certain PFAS may affect different systems in the body. The National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is working with various partners to better understand how exposure to PFAS might affect people’s health.

If you are concerned about exposure to PFAS in your drinking water, you may contact one of the following agencies

* **Michigan Department of Health and Human Services** (DHHS) Toxicology Hotline at 800-648-6942
* **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC)/ATSDR: [**https://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/**](https://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/) or 800-232-4636

Currently, scientists are still learning about the health effects of exposures to PFAS, including exposure to mixtures.

**May I bathe or swim in water containing PFAS?**

Yes; PFAS does not easily absorb into the skin. It is safe to bathe, as well as do your laundry and household cleaning. It is also safe to swim in and use recreationally.

**Is it safe to eat fish in these areas?**

Information is available in the State of Michigan Eat Safe Fish guides, which are available at [**www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish**](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish).

**What other ways could I be exposed to PFOA, PFOS and other PFAS compounds?**

PFAS are used in many consumer products. They are used in food packaging, such as fast food wrappers and microwave popcorn bags; waterproof and stain resistant fabrics, such as outdoor clothing, upholstery, and carpeting; nonstick coatings on cookware; and cleaning supplies, including some soaps and shampoos. People can be exposed to these chemicals in house dust, indoor and outdoor air, food, and drinking water. Usually the amounts of PFAS a person may be exposed to is quite small.

**Who can I call if I have questions about PFAS in my drinking water?**

If any resident has additional questions regarding this issue, it is best to email DEQ-PFAS-DrinkingWater@michigan.gov. You may also contact your local health department and they will be able to assist you.

**What is being done about this issue?**

State and local agencies are actively working to obtain more information about this situation as quickly as possible. As part of the DEQ’s initiative to proactively test these systems, approximately 1200 Community Water Supplies and 460 schools will be sampled over the next 18 months. When complete, this monitoring effort will have sampled the drinking water supply for approximately 75% of Michigan’s residents. Additional monitoring of the drinking water will be conducted if determined to be necessary to demonstrate that the PFAS levels are consistent, and reliably below the existing LHA. If a possible source is suspected, additional monitoring in and around affected areas will also be performed by the DEQ, which will help us answer more questions and determine next steps.

**How can I stay updated on the situation?**

The state has created a website where you can find information about PFAS contamination and efforts to address it in Michigan. The site will be updated as more information becomes available. The website address is [**http://michigan.gov/pfasresponse**](http://michigan.gov/pfasresponse)**.**