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LWD Asks Customers to Conserve Water, Stop Outdoor Use

New Outdoor Water Ban Will Reduce Demand from Two Sources

The Littleton Water Department is seeking the help of its customers to conserve water by avoiding outdoor use. LWD has placed a ban on outdoor watering to reduce the demand placed on the water system's two fully operational well sites.

LWD is minimizing use of its third well site, Spectacle Pond, after voluntary testing found the presence of contaminants, Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, otherwise known as PFAS. While the levels of PFAS at Spectacle Pond are below current federal and state guidance values, they are above MassDEP's proposed new limit expected to take effect in January. LWD is therefore taking short-term and long-term steps to remove the pollutant from the water supply. This step leaves LWD with two fully operational wells to serve the entire water system.

"Installing a temporary filtration system and a new water treatment plant to remove PFAS will take time. While that work continues, LWD will minimize the use of the Spectacle Pond source and rely on the Whitcomb Ave. and Beaver Brook well sites. Customers can help us by conserving water – outdoors and even indoors – to reduce the pressure on the two fully operational wells," said Nick Lawler, general manager of LELWD. "All of our water meets current federal and state guidelines for drinking water, but we want to be ahead of the curve and work to reduce the presence of PFAS through a new water treatment plant with PFAS filtration."

In the coming days, water customers will be mailed a public notice from the LWD and the MassDEP. It provides an extensive explanation of PFAS, the federal and state limits, and the amounts found in Littleton's public water wells. The letter also explains that the federal and state guidelines for PFAS are currently 70 parts per trillion, but that the state is considering a new limit of 20 parts per trillion.

Water samples voluntarily collected by LWD at the Spectacle Pond Water Treatment Plant on June 19 and confirmed on August 6 showed an average total of 25 parts per trillion for six chemicals in the PFAS family. The test results are below the current guidelines, but above the new, proposed state limit. The most recent round of testing at Whitcomb Avenue and Beaver Brook well sites showed levels of 5-7 parts per trillion at both locations.

While Spectacle Pond test results were well below the current 70 ppt state guidelines, LWD has taken steps toward removing PFAS from the water supply, including:

- Minimized use of the Spectacle Pond source.
- Investigated alternative sources of water and treatment options.
- Hired an engineering firm to study options for installing short-term and long-term filtration to remove PFAS, including the construction of a new water treatment plant at Whitcomb Ave. to remove contaminants in raw water drawn from wells at Whitcomb Ave. and Spectacle Pond.
- Planned to continue to sample the water sources for PFAS on a quarterly basis.
- Explored interconnections with other public water systems to purchase drinking water.
- Started investigating the source of the PFAS with assistance from MassDEP.

PFAS are fluorinated organic chemicals that were once common in industrial processes, firefighting foam, and in the manufacture of carpets, clothing, fabrics, and paper packaging to make them resistant to water, grease and stains. Contamination is typically localized and associated with a specific facility – for example, an airfield or military base – at which they were used for firefighting or a facility where these chemicals were produced or used.

The presence of PFAS in drinking water systems is an issue across the state and nation. MassDEP recommends that sensitive consumers (pregnant women, nursing mothers, and infants) minimize exposure to PFAS and that public water systems take steps to expeditiously lower levels of PFAS.

More information on PFAS is available from the following sources:

- MassDEP Fact Sheet – PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>
- USEPA's Drinking Water Health Advisories can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Statement for PFOS and PFOA can be found at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>

- For additional information on possible health effects, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Research and Standards, at 617-556-1165.