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## **LELWD's New Treatment Plant Called National Model**

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Congresswoman Trahan*

Following a recent tour of the water treatment plant construction site, Congresswoman Lori Trahan called the project a national model for communities dealing with the presence of the chemical contaminants PFAS in drinking water sources. LELWD is one year into constructing a \$24.5 million water treatment plant, a project supported by state and federal funding.

Trahan joined LELWD's Board Chairman Scott Larsen and General Manager Nick Lawler, along with state and town officials on June 30<sup>th</sup> to view the progress on the 10,800-square-foot facility that will process up to 1.8 million gallons of water per day. It will remove the manmade pollutant PFAS and the naturally occurring contaminants iron and manganese from raw water supplied by the Spectacle Pond well and the Whitcomb Avenue wells.

"Littleton's new water treatment plant is a model for communities across the nation facing drinking water contaminations from PFAS and other chemicals that threaten people's lives. That's why I point to them as an example of what's possible when I talk to my colleagues about the urgent need to address toxic chemical exposure," said Congresswoman Trahan, in a statement released by her office. "I couldn't be happier to see the progress being made in the project's construction, and I look forward to working with Littleton leaders to ensure as much of the loan is forgiven with federal funds as possible.

In 2019, LELWD's proactive testing discovered PFAS in the Spectacle Pond well higher than the current state limit, and LELWD took immediate, temporary steps to ensure water delivered to consumers met state standards. LELWD simultaneously embarked on the long-term solution of constructing the Whitcomb Avenue treatment plant, which includes a 3.5-mile-long transmission main to deliver raw water from the Spectacle Pond well for filtration. A year after LELWD started testing, state environmental officials began mandating Massachusetts water suppliers test for PFAS.

"On behalf of the ratepayers, the Board of Water Commissioners is extremely grateful to Congresswoman Trahan for her support for federal funding to offset the cost of the project

and her advocacy to address the national problem of PFAS pollution. The ratepayers deserve and we deliver safe, clean water, and the new treatment plant will have a long-lasting impact on the quality of life in Littleton,” said Chairman Larsen.

The \$24.5 million project is being financed with a zero-interest loan from the State Revolving Loan Fund. The project received a grant for 20 percent loan forgiveness, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act. The grant means LELWD ratepayers will pay 80 percent of the funds borrowed, a savings of up to \$5 million.

“The water commissioners, LELWD staff and our ratepayers have teamed up, led, and financed the effort to remove the PFAS chemicals, even though we did not put that pollutant in the groundwater. This leadership is being recognized by Congresswoman Trahan, and we in turn thank her for being a national voice to bring light to this public health challenge that is faced by water suppliers in Massachusetts and across the nation,” said General Manager Lawler.

While PFAS is present in the Spectacle Pond well, Littleton’s public water supply is a safe and reliable source of drinking water. Regular testing shows Littleton’s water, as delivered to consumers, meets all MassDEP standards and is safe for all consumers. Use of the Spectacle Pond well has been greatly reduced, and combined with the ongoing drought, is the reason LELWD consumers are asked to follow water restrictions that limit outdoor watering to vegetable gardens and handheld watering between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

PFAS is an acronym for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a family of chemical compounds known for their non-stick properties and resistance to breaking down in the environment. PFAS have been linked to numerous health effects with state regulators cautioning pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, infants and immunosuppressed individuals to avoid consuming water with PFAS levels above 20 ppt.

For more information on PFAS and the water treatment project, visit [lelwd.com](http://lelwd.com) or call 978-540-2222.

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