NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois EPA Notifies Village of Dupo and Connected Water Systems of Right-to-Know Requirements Triggered by Recent Sampling

PFAS Chemical Detected in Groundwater; System Owners/Operators, Private Well Owners, and all Residents are Encouraged to be Proactive in Reducing PFAS Exposure

Springfield – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) is notifying the owners and operators of the Dupo Community Water System (CWS) that there has been a detection of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), a Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) compound, in the most recent water sampling required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) under the Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5). The sample identified PFOS at 4.5 parts per trillion (ppt), which is above the federal Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) and the Illinois Class I groundwater quality standard of 4 ppt. The Illinois EPA is also notifying owners and operators of two systems, Columbia CWS and Prairie du Pont Public Water District, which can obtain water from the Dupo CWS through an emergency connection.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Act requires the owners or operators of CWSs to notify their customers when groundwater contamination poses a threat of exposure to the public above the Class I groundwater quality standards. Notification may be made by mail, email, post card, text message, or telephone within five business days of official receipt of the Illinois EPA's notice. Within seven days of sending the notices, the owners or operators of the CWS must provide the Illinois EPA with written proof that the notices have been sent.

"Right-to-Know laws were developed to ensure the public is informed when contamination poses a threat of exposure," **said Illinois EPA Acting Director James Jennings**. "While this notice applies to specific locations, Illinois EPA encourages all residents to take steps to reduce exposure to PFAS compounds."

PFAS are a group of several thousand human-made chemicals that are manufactured for their oil and water-resistant properties. Since the 1940s, PFAS have been used in a wide range of consumer products, industrial processes, and in some fire-fighting foams (called aqueous film-forming foam or AFFF). This has resulted in PFAS being released into the air, water, and soil. PFAS do not easily break down under natural

- more -

conditions and are often referred to as “forever chemicals.” Attached are copies of the Public Health Notices being provided to the CWSs, which includes information on potential health effects, home water filter treatment options, and ways to minimize PFAS exposure from other sources.

Illinois has been among the most proactive states in the country in developing and implementing PFAS health standards and groundwater quality standards, in order to protect its residents. Illinois EPA has issued PFAS Health Advisories to provide guidance to local officials and CWS operators in protecting the health of water consumers, and calculates health based guidance levels (HBGLs) which represent the concentrations in drinking water at which no adverse health effects are expected to occur. In 2025, Illinois adopted groundwater quality standards for six PFAS, based on the most recent scientific information available. Those include perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), PFOS, hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid, also known as GenX (HFPO-DA), perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), pefluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and perfluorobutanesulfonic acid (PFBS). U.S. EPA recently set MCLs, which are federal drinking water standards, for certain PFAS, requiring CWSs to sample for and comply with the federal MCLs for PFAS by April 2029.

All residents may be at risk from PFAS exposure. PFAS are stable, persistent chemicals and will bioaccumulate in blood and organs over time. Current scientific literature indicates that people are primarily exposed to PFAS through the ingestion of food and water, including:

- ingestion of contaminated food and water, including food packaged in containers or wrappers containing PFAS.
- hand-to-mouth contact with products treated with PFAS (such as carpets and textiles) or products that contain PFAS (such as paints, and cosmetics).
- incidental ingestion of household dust.

CWSs, private well owners, and residents are encouraged to be proactive in addressing potential PFAS contamination, not only in drinking water, but through the other common routes of exposure. Ways to reduce exposure include:

- Choose stainless steel, cast iron, or non-stick cookware that does not contain PFAS.
- Avoid water repellents on clothing.
- Use personal care products without “PTFE” or “Fluoro” ingredients.
- Use water filters designed to remove PFAS (NSF/ANSI 53 or 58 standards).

In addition, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) encourages private well owners near the impacted water systems to test their water for PFAS or consider installing treatment, such as activated carbon filters, on drinking water faucets.

"When elevated levels of contaminants are found in drinking water supplies, it is important for nearby private well owners to take appropriate precautions," said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. "IDPH's Division of Environmental Health is available to assist private well owners in finding an accredited laboratory and evaluating test results."

Private well owners who have health-related questions or require technical assistance can contact IDPH by phone at (217) 782-5830 or by email at dph.tox@Illinois.gov.

The notice provided to CWS will be posted on the Illinois EPA website at: https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/drinking-water/public-water-users/notices.html. More information regarding PFAS, including health effects and additional ways to reduce exposure, is available on the Illinois EPA PFAS webpage at https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/pfas.html.

Additional information can be found on the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry website at: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/. The IDPH provides additional information on PFAS in drinking water at: https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/private-water/fact-sheets/pfas-drinking-water.html.

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Attachment: Public Health Notices

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
2520 West Iles Avenue • P.O. Box 19276 • Springfield, Illinois • 62794-9276 • 217-782-3397

JB Pritzker, Governor **James Jennings**, Acting Director

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE – IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Why You're Receiving This Notice

Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), a Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) compound, has been detected in the Dupo Community Water System at a level that exceeds the groundwater quality standard established by the State of Illinois. This notice is required by law under the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and the Groundwater Protection Act. The information is summarized below:

- **PFAS Compound**: PFOS
- **Detected Level**: 4.5 parts per trillion
- **Illinois Standard**: 4 parts per trillion

What Are PFAS?

PFAS are human-made chemicals used since the 1940s. Because they repel oil and water and resist heat, they are commonly found in products such as non-stick cookware, food packaging, waterproof clothing, stain-resistant furniture, and firefighting foam. PFAS pollute water through spills, leaks, and disposal of products. They are often called "forever chemicals" because they remain in the environment for decades.

Health Risks

Long-term exposure to PFAS may increase the risk of:

- Fertility problems and high blood pressure during pregnancy
- Developmental impacts in children
- Certain cancers, including kidney, prostate, and testicular
- A weakened immune system
- Disruption to key hormonal systems, such as thyroid function, reproductive hormones, stress response, and metabolic regulation

Exposure does not guarantee health problems. Risk depends on the PFAS level and how long you've been exposed. Consult your healthcare provider for health concerns.

Reducing PFAS in Your Drinking Water

Boiling water does not remove PFAS, but certain water filters can reduce or remove them. With many filters on the market, it's important to choose one that is specifically certified to remove or reduce PFAS. Filters vary by type, brand, and installation method—such as pitcher filters, faucet-mounted units, or whole-home systems. Below are types of filters shown to effectively reduce or remove PFAS levels:

- **Charcoal (Granular Activated Carbon or GAC)** – traps chemicals as water flows through
- **Reverse Osmosis (RO) Systems** – filters out pollutants using a thin membrane
- **Ion Exchange Resins** –tiny beads that attract and hold contaminants

Check for Certification

Use filters that meet National Sanitation Foundation/American National Standards Institute (NSF/ANSI) standards, specifically NSF/ANSI 53 (for reducing health-related contaminants, including PFAS) or NSF/ANSI 58 (for reverse osmosis systems). You can verify certification at: https://info.nsf.org/Certified/dwtu/. Be sure to replace filters as directed by the manufacturer; failure to do so can increase PFAS exposure.

Questions?

Contact Jeff Guy, Illinois EPA Office of Community Relations:
📞 (217) 785-8724
📧 Jeff.Guy@illinois.gov

Learn More

Scan the QR code below to visit the Illinois EPA PFAS information page:
https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/pfas.html

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