

**SAMMAMISH PLATEAU WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

RESOLUTION NO. 5092

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF SAMMAMISH
PLATEAU WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON,
AUTHORIZING AND ADOPTING A DISTRICT APPROACH TO PER- AND
POLY-FLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS).

WHEREAS, the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District is an RCW Washington Title 57 Water-Sewer District serving portions of the Cities of Sammamish and Issaquah, and unincorporated King County; and

WHEREAS, the quality of the drinking water the District provides its customers is paramount; and

WHEREAS, PFAS are a family of manmade chemicals that are not naturally occurring in the environment; and

WHEREAS, PFAS are categorized by the federal government as unregulated contaminants of emerging concern; and

WHEREAS, as an outcome of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR3), PFAS was detected in District primary groundwater production Wells 7, 8, and 9 located in the Lower Issaquah Valley; and

WHEREAS, as part of an internal investigative process, the District detected levels of PFAS in Wells 1, 2, and 10 that draw water from the separate Plateau Aquifer located on the Sammamish Plateau; and

WHEREAS, While the State of Washington continues to assess PFAS remediation requirements, and the USEPA evaluates these compounds, decisions about PFAS treatment are left to the local utilities; and

WHEREAS, the District Board of Commissioners has determined the need to adopt a District Approach to Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) to establish a strategy in relation to evaluating PFAS treatment options, pursuing state and federal funding opportunities, monitoring evolving state and federal regulatory developments, openly communicating information on PFAS to its customers; and

WHEREAS, said District Approach to Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) is attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District, King County, Washington, as follows:

1. The Board of Commissioners of Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District hereby adopts the District Approach Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) (Exhibit A).

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District, King County, Washington, at a regular open public meeting held on the 18th day of April, 2022.

**Individual Commissioner's
Vote on this Resolution:**

Approved:
Opposed: _____
Abstained: _____
Absent: _____


Ryika Hooshangi (Apr 18, 2022 16:42 PDT)

Ryika Hooshangi, President and Commissioner



Lloyd Warren, Vice President and Commissioner


Mary Shustov (Apr 18, 2022 17:02 PDT)

Mary Shustov, Secretary and Commissioner



Tom Harman, Commissioner

Nav Otal

Nav Otal, Commissioner

Exhibit A

District Approach to Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Background

Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a family of manmade chemicals that are not naturally occurring in the environment. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) fall within this chemical family and historically were the most commonly manufactured and used PFAS. PFAS are found in many common consumer products such as food packaging, non-stick cookware, stain resistant carpet treatments, water resistant clothing, cleaning products, paints, some cosmetics, and firefighting foam.

PFAS are categorized by the federal government as unregulated contaminants of emerging concern. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) collects data from across the country on unregulated contaminants that may be present in drinking water and uses the data to determine if the contaminants occur at levels high enough to be regulated in the future. The USEPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rules (UCMRs) provide a basis for future regulatory actions to protect public health.

In 2016, as an outcome of the USEPA's Third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR3), PFAS was detected in three of Sammamish Plateau Water's (District) primary groundwater production wells (Wells 7, 8, and 9) located in the Lower Issaquah Valley. The PFAS detected did not exceed the USEPA's combined health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOS and PFOA.

In 2021, the State of Washington established initial PFAS regulatory standards referred to as State Action Levels (SALs). Based upon the District's prior monitoring data, Wells 7 and 8 exceed the state's SAL for PFOS. In order for the District to return these wells to service, PFAS treatment would be required.

Proactive approach to PFAS

Since detecting the PFAS in its wells, the District has taken proactive measures including:

- In 2016, initiating transparent communications about PFAS and the proactive steps the District would be taking to protect the quality of drinking water.
- Developing a groundwater model to track the movement of PFAS contaminants in the aquifer.
- Going beyond the minimum standards set by the USEPA and conducting a continuous and intensive testing program to monitor PFAS data and understand the impacts in the aquifer.
- In 2017, removing Wells 7 and 8 from production and shifting to Well 9, the well with the lowest levels of PFAS.

- Purchasing additional regional water through Cascade Water Alliance to blend with groundwater from Well 9 to replace water previously produced from Wells 7 and 8, in order to reach non-detect levels.
- Adopting a *Drinking Water Quality Policy Statement* outlining Board policy with respect to drinking water standards, groundwater and aquifer protection, public outreach, and transparency.
- Actively monitoring evolving regulations at the state and federal level to comply with future PFAS drinking water standards.
- Completing an in-depth PFAS removal treatment plant analysis including evaluating PFAS treatment options, site-specific treatment feasibility, and costs associated with treatment versus the long-term purchase of regional water.
- Engaging an engineering firm to design a water treatment plant to remove PFAS from Wells 7, 8 and 9; to ensure the District is fully prepared should treatment be required in the future to continue meeting state or federal drinking water regulations.
- Retaining a group of law firms to participate in a lawsuit against 3M Company, E.I. DuPont de Nemours, Inc., and other primary PFAS manufacturers for their involvement in the manufacture, promotion, and sale of the chemical.
- Pursuing state and federal grants and funding assistance to help offset the financial impact to ratepayers for the construction of a water treatment plant to remove PFAS from Wells 7, 8, and 9. Project construction costs are estimated to be \$18 million.

Additional PFAS detection

In 2021, as part of an internal investigative process, the District detected PFAS in three additional wells that draw water from a separate aquifer located on the Sammamish Plateau. The levels of PFAS in Wells 1, 2, and 10 in the Plateau Aquifer are below existing USEPA health advisory levels and State Action Levels. The District has developed testing and monitoring plans for these three wells and continues to assess these new findings and evaluate additional PFAS removal treatment needs and costs.

Challenges and considerations

The USEPA and the State of Washington have yet to establish Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for PFAS in drinking water. The USEPA has developed health advisory levels for PFAS, but no formal or enforceable regulations. In 2021, the State of Washington adopted testing protocols and State Action Levels (SALs) for PFAS. The SALs are used to identify when PFAS levels would require additional monitoring and/or notification to customers. While the State of Washington continues to assess PFAS remediation requirements, and the USEPA evaluates these compounds, decisions about PFAS treatment are left to the local utilities.

The District is in a tenuous position in that it had no involvement in the release of PFAS into our local groundwater aquifers from which we take our drinking water supplies, but has responsibility for ensuring safe drinking water to our customers. The District Board of Commissioners continues to evaluate if and when treatment will be required, what levels of treatment are appropriate, and when to proactively proceed with implementing treatment.

Moving forward

Because the safety of the drinking water supply is paramount, the District will continue a rigorous water-testing program, and continue to monitor evolving state and federal regulatory developments and maintain compliance with all drinking water standards and requirements. Through litigation and legislative engagement, the District will continue to advocate on behalf of its customers.

The Board of Commissioners is looking at PFAS treatment options and is evaluating when and whether to proceed with construction of treatment facilities based upon potential future state and federal water quality requirements, costs, rate impacts to customers, and customer input. The District is being proactive by finalizing the design of a treatment plant for Wells 7, 8, and 9, and pursuing state and federal funding opportunities to offset construction costs. A treatment plant would remove PFAS from water that comes from Wells 7, 8 and 9.

While the planning for treatment for Wells 7, 8 and 9 is well under way, less is known about PFAS in Wells 1, 2, and 10. Additional work needs to be done to better understand the extent of PFAS contamination, treatment options, and mitigation costs. Until this work is completed the District will be evaluating operational changes which will reduce or eliminate PFAS contributions from these wells.

The District remains committed to openly communicating information on PFAS to its customers and will continue to advocate on behalf of its customers to ensure they have safe drinking water and are relieved of the fiscal burden of the construction of treatment facilities needed to mitigate PFAS contamination.

The District remains committed to meeting all state and federal drinking water standards. The District will strive to eliminate PFAS from its drinking water. The District's approach in meeting this goal will take into consideration evolving regulatory requirements, the timing and amount of capital investment, rate impacts, the potential for acquiring state and federal funding, and customer support for PFAS investments.