



What's In Your Water?

Disappointing Deferrals Continue Exposing Long Islanders to Emerging Contaminants in Drinking Water

In 2020, New York State adopted the strongest drinking water standards in the nation for 1,4-dioxane, PFAS, and PFOA. These carcinogenic contaminants have been found in high levels in Long Island water supply wells and are linked to significant human health impacts. As a result of these new standards, water suppliers are required to test for these chemicals and provide treatment if levels exceed the new limits.

Unfortunately, 31 water suppliers throughout the state applied to NY State Department of Health for deferrals, which allows water suppliers two years to delay meeting drinking water standards. Twenty four water suppliers on Long Island applied for deferrals and 21 were granted. Homeowners were subsequently issued letters directly from their water suppliers informing them of the deferral and the potential that their drinking water well exceeded the safe limits enacted by NY Department of Health. Letters to residents did not provide adequate information for the public, including: levels of emerging contaminants found, how many wells were impacted, or timeline for removal of these chemicals.

CCE researched each Long Island water district and compiled the letters sent to homeowners for all 21 water districts in order to identify which districts received deferrals. For each of the 21 districts, we then gathered information on the levels of emerging contaminants exceeding state limits, the population served by the supplier, and the type of deferral received (1,4-dioxane, PFAS, PFOS, or all three).

Nassau County Deferrals: Data from 2019 - 2021

Water District	Population Served	Deferral	1,4 Dioxane Standard: 1ppb	PFOA Standard : 10 ppt	PFOS Standard: 10 ppt
Water Authority of Western Nassau County	120,000	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	17.5	68.7	15.3
Garden City Park Water District	18,000	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	6.9	57.5	17.4
Hicksville Water District	42,000	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	8.1	9.1	30.8
Village of Garden City	22,371	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	4.7	27.7	10.2
Village of Mineola	19,245	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane		23.8	7.8
New York American Water - Glen Head	135,000	PFOS			17.6
Albertson Water District	13,500	PFOA/PFOS		10.2	11.8
Jericho Water District	58,000	1,4 Dioxane	10.8		
Port Washington Water District	30,000	1,4 Dioxane	4.5		
Town of Hempstead Department of Water	117,361	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	4.1		
Village of Hempstead	53,891	1,4 Dioxane	4		
Westbury Water District	20,500	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	1.6		
Franklin Square Water District	20,000	1,4 Dioxane	1.2		

Suffolk County Deferrals: Data from 2019 - 2021

Water District	Population Served	Deferral	1,4 Dioxane Standard: 1ppb	PFOA Standard: 10 ppt	PFOS Standard: 10 ppt
Hampton Bays Water District	15,500	PFOA/PFOS			40.9
Brookhaven National Lab		PFOS			35.1
Riverhead Water District	35,000	PFOA/PFOS			15.9
Suffolk County Water Authority District 10 - Commack, East Northport, Northport	35,133	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	1.61		
Suffolk County Water Authority District 11 - East Commack, Kings Park	26,533	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	3.36		
Suffolk County Water Authority District 12 - North Bellport, Bohemia, Brentwood, Centereach, Central Islip, Coram, Deer Park, Eastport, Farmingville, Great River, Hauppauge, Holbrook, Holtsville, Huntington, Islandia, Lake Grove, Lake Ronkonkoma, Manorville, Mastic, Medford, Middle Island, Nesconset, Nissequogue, Head of Harbor, North Patchogue, Ridge, Ronkonkoma, Saint James, North Shirley, Shoreham, Smithtown, Wading River, Wyandanch, Wheatley Heights	369,790	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	2.31	10	
South Huntington Water District	81,760	1,4 Dioxane	1.6		
Saint James Water District	11,807	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	1.3	10	
Smithtown Water District	20,562	PFOA/PFOS 1,4 Dioxane	1.3	10	
Greenlawn Water District	42,000	1,4 Dioxane	1.1		

CCE Recommendations

Improving the deferral process to increase transparency and raise public awareness.

1. The public has the right to know the level of contamination in their drinking water.

Water districts that receive a deferral from the NYS DOH need to include in their public notice the levels of 1,4 dioxane, PFOA, and PFOS that exceed NYS drinking water standards. None of the public notices provided members of the public with the actual levels of contaminants. To obtain this important information CCE reviewed the most current water quality reports for each water district and made phone calls to individual water districts.

- ♦ The MCL for 1,4 dioxane is 1 ppb. Some water districts reported levels of 1,4 dioxane of 1.2 ppb, while others reported levels up to 18.6 ppb.
- ♦ The MCL for PFOA and PFOS is 10 ppt. SCWA reported levels of PFOA of 10 ppt, while the Water Authority of Western Nassau County reported levels of PFOA of 68.7ppt, and Garden City Park Water District has levels of 57.5ppt.
- ♦ SCWA provided a chart of contamination for 25 distribution areas which is a good start however, the PFOA and PFOS contamination was reported in ppb not ppt, which leaves the customer to have to do the mathematical conversion to understand how the levels compare to the drinking water standard of 10ppt.

2. Water Districts with a deferral from NYS DOH need to provide customers information on *how many wells* are impacted by 1,4 dioxane, PFOA, and PFOS. This information helps customers understand the extent of contamination. For example, Franklin Square Water District noted in their public notice there is only 1 well impacted with 1,4 dioxane and they immediately removed this well from service. Jericho Water District identified 8 wells impacted with 1,4 dioxane contamination, with levels up to 10.8ppb.

3. Water Districts that receive a deferral from NYS DOH need to provide customers with a timeline for compliance with new the MCL's set for 1,4 dioxane, PFOA, and PFOS. There are several water districts that included a timeline for implementing treatment on each impacted well. This information is informative to the customer. Water districts that included a timeline include Franklin Square, Port Washington, Town of Hempstead, Westbury, Albertson, Village of Hempstead, Hicksville.


4. All deferral requests for a 3rd year for PFOA and PFOS should be denied. Water districts that received deferrals for PFOA and PFOS, and not 1,4 Dioxane contamination should NOT be able to receive additional deferral time to meet drinking water standards. The state process allows for a deferral for two years and then a potential additional deferral for a third year. PFOA and PFOS can be removed from drinking water using granulated activated carbon filter which is widely available. A two-year deferral is more than sufficient to provide time for water districts to comply.

5. All deferral information should be included on the NYS DOH website. Consumers should be able to log onto the NYSDOH website to determine which water suppliers have deferrals, levels of contamination, and identify timelines for each water district to comply with drinking water standards.



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