



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
CONTAMINATED SITE REMEDIATION & REDEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF REMEDIATION MANAGEMENT

401 East State Street

P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 401-05M

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420

Tel. (609) 292-1251

www.nj.gov/dep

PHILIP D. MURPHY

Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY

Lt. Governor

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE

Commissioner

November 7, 2024

Mr. Pat Evangelista, Director
Superfund and Emergency Management Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region II
290 Broadway, Floor 19
New York, NY 10007-1866

Re: Referral for Assessment and Removal Actions
Route 31 and Rymon Road Ground Water Contamination Site
NJ State Highway 31
Washington Township, Warren County, New Jersey
NJDEP PI# 834057

Dear Mr. Evangelista,

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) respectfully submits the Route 31 and Rymon Road Ground Water Contamination site located in Washington Township, Warren County for further assessment and removal action consideration under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). Elevated levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been found in soil and ground water at residential and commercial properties associated with historical dumping that require immediate further action to protect public health.

The Route 31 and Rymon Road Ground Water Contamination site is in the eastern portion of Warren County within Washington Township, approximately 1.5 miles south of Washington Borough, within the New Jersey Highlands Planning Area. The area is predominantly agricultural/residential with commercial businesses that are located along NJ State Highway 31 (Route 31) which traverses through the area of impacted potable drinking water wells and properties that contain soil contamination.

Contamination was first discovered in March 2019 when routine sampling of the John Johnson Chrysler Jeep, Dodge auto dealership's potable well identified PFAS compounds above the New Jersey Drinking Water Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) and Ground Water Quality Standards. This property is located at 410 Route 31 in Washinton Township. Sampling results initially showed perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) at concentrations up to 420 parts per trillion (ppt). The well

was resampled on three additional occasions in 2019 with PFOS being detected at concentrations up to 1,000 ppt.

As a result of the exceedances detected in the well, the NJDEP's Bureau of Environmental Measurements and Site Assessment (BEMSA) initiated a potable well investigation in the surrounding area. Initial potable well sampling was performed in February 2020. Between February 2020 and June 2023, the NJDEP performed twelve sampling events sampling approximately 121 private drinking water wells for PFAS compounds. Of these wells, 36 exhibited PFAS compounds at concentrations exceeding the NJ MCLs/Ground Water Quality Standards.

Following the February 2020 sampling event, the NJDEP provided bottled water to five properties as interim measure prior to the NJDEP installation of Point of Entry Treatment (POET) systems. The remaining impacted properties across the 2020-2023 study area were provided the opportunity to file a NJ Spill Fund Claim for the installation of POET systems for their potable wells. On September 6, 2023, NJDEP, Washington Township, New Jersey Water Bank, and NJ American Water met to discuss the potential of extending public water lines further south along Route 31 to service portions of the impacted area.

After the potable well impacts were discovered, historical research of the impacted potable area was performed by BEMSA. Findings of this study indicated that Castle Creek Fabrics, located on Brass Castle Road straddling the border of Washington Township and Washington Borough, deposited their sludge waste at the subject properties then owned by Harry Rymon from the late 1950s to approximately 1974. In addition, Castle Creek discharged their liquid process waste to Pohatcong Creek located adjacent to the Castle Creek facility in Washington Township/Washington Borough.

From November 2022 to March 2023, BEMSA collected and analyzed 169 soil samples from approximately 164 acres of active and former farm properties along Route 31. Results indicated high levels of PFAS compounds in soil.

NJDEP requests that EPA perform a CERCLA site assessment to evaluate the site conditions for removal action eligibility and consideration for placement on the National Priority List. We ask that the evaluation include all potable wells within the study area that do not have POET systems. In addition, since some of the former disposal site properties are active farm fields, the NJDEP also requests that EPA assess PFAS uptake in crops and potential use of those crops for livestock and human consumption.

This request is being made under CERCLA, 42 U.S.C.A. §§ 9601, et seq. and the National Contingency Plan, 40 C.F.R. Part 300, which allows the U.S. EPA to respond to and recover costs incurred in response to releases or threats of releases of pollutants and contaminants, as deemed necessary in EPA's sole discretion, to abate an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health or welfare or the environment at the location stated above.

To ensure that NJDEP is prepared to respond to inquiries concerning this action, please provide my office with a copy of any fact sheet or public notice related to this action prior to release.



The Department appreciates EPA's consideration of this referral. Any questions or requests for additional information regarding this site should be directed to Andrew Cyr of NJDEP at andrew.cyr@dep.nj.gov. Please copy Peter Cagno at peter.cagno@dep.nj.gov on project-related Pollution/Situation Reports.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues in further detail, please contact me at (609) 940-4515.

Sincerely,



Gwen B. Zervas, P.E.
Director

C: Bill Hanrahan, BEMSA
Andrew Cyr, BEMSA
Peter Cagno, BSM
Christopher Blake, BSM
Joseph Rotola, Chief, Removal Action Branch, EPA Region II
Ildefonso Acosta, Chief, Pre-Remedial Section, EPA Region II

