



Town of Coupeville

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October 1, 2017

Dear Coupeville Water Customers,

It's been a few months since I've sent any news on water quality issues so I thought I would give you all an update. As you are likely aware, in November 2016, the Town was alerted to the presence of perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) at OLF Coupeville, likely related to aviation firefighting foam used by the Navy, in the groundwater that serves central Whidbey Island. When this information was brought to light, the Town tested its wells and the water produced from our treatment plant. The Department of the Navy also tested the Town's wells and private wells. The Town and Navy test results were comparable. These results were provided to water customers and the media in December 2016.

The Town of Coupeville has continued to test the Town's water for two PFCs, PFOA and PFOS, on a quarterly basis. The results have remained consistent with the first set of tests the Town and Navy conducted late last year. We have been testing Well 1-08 and the point-of-distribution, the only two locations that originally showed levels of PFOA. "Point-of-distribution" means water that is blended from three wells, run through our water treatment plant and then distributed to our customers. Both test locations continue to test 'non-detect' for PFOS. Our water treatment plant treats for iron and manganese and adds chlorine. The Town's water system is not currently equipped to treat for PFCs. The Town has always blended water from several wells and it turns out this blending reduces the tested levels to a point well below the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advisory level at the point of consumption. The Town is unable to rely exclusively on wells that test non-detect due to production volumes necessary to meet demand, aesthetic (taste) concerns, and the risk of saltwater intrusion into the aquifer.

Test results are given in parts per trillion or ppt. The EPA has not set a mandatory regulation level for PFCs but has set a lifetime advisory level for PFOA and PFOS combined at 70 parts per trillion (ppt). To put parts per trillion into perspective, I looked up some analogies to help us understand how sensitive these tests are. One ppt is the same as one ounce in 7.5 billion gallons of water. Other examples would be one ppt is the same as one grain of sand in an Olympic size swimming pool or one second in 32,000 years. It's really remarkable this level of impurity can be measured. All results listed below are ppt.

	Town Test 11/2016 Two samples taken	Navy Test November 2016	Town Test March 2017	Town Test June 2017
Well 1-08	56 and 62	55	64	54
Distribution	27 and 25	38	36	31

A few people are asking about the other PFCs that are included in the 'method 537' test we use, which is the test protocol approved by the EPA. In addition to PFOS and PFOA, the test also includes results for PFBS, PFHpA, PFHxS and PFNA. Right now, the EPA has not set regulatory standards or a lifetime advisory level for these PFCs so there is nothing to judge them against and no clear way to make decisions about them. More study needs to be done on these four additional compounds. We do have some readings for two of the compounds, PFHpA and PFHxS. You can see the results for all of our testing on the Town website, www.townofcoupeville.org. When, and if, the EPA or the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) set standards for these compounds, either regulatory or advisory, we will already have test results and be able to react accordingly.

I want to assure you that even though we have not issued press releases for the past few months, the Town is still monitoring the situation and working with many partners to learn all we can about PFCs and potential long-term solutions to protect our water supply. We are fortunate to be working with scientists, chemists, geologists, hydrologists, and toxicologists at the EPA, DOH, and Island County. We are also working with the Navy, sharing information and discussing possible mitigation. You might know the Navy has drilled 27 different monitoring wells on its property at the OLF and results have recently come in showing the probable location of the contamination. These results coupled with what we are learning about groundwater movement and the geology in the area are providing all of us with information we can use to try to predict what might happen in the future and what mitigation might be needed.

Possibilities we are reviewing include drilling new wells, adding filters to individual wells, adding filters to the treatment plant, changing the pumping schedules of existing wells, changing the blend of water...the possibilities are numerous and require much research and analysis. The contamination levels, along with the possibility of changing advisory levels or mandatory regulation levels, and/or the addition of more compounds into the mix, create many moving targets. We are working diligently to identify the best long-term solutions to a problem that has not even been completely defined yet. Clearly, public health and safety is our number one priority, while making sound, informed financial decisions on behalf of our rate-payers.

Our Utility Superintendent, Joe Grogan, is very knowledgeable and experienced with water treatment and has many good contacts around the state. Joe has been working closely with our partners at the EPA, the DOH, Island County and the Navy. The Town is fortunate to have him on our team at this time. I would encourage you to call Joe or myself if you have questions or concerns and we both thank you for your patience and support while we continue to work on this.

Finally, I want to confirm, again, that the water the Town of Coupeville provides meets all the current health standards for the Department of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency and Island County. I will continue to keep you in-the-loop as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Hughes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Molly Hughes
Mayor