

Emerging Contaminants

The Challenges and Threats of a Regulated Utility Response

2017 NECPUC Annual Symposium

PFOA Impact on Pennichuck

- Pennichuck is the franchise holder in three communities where private wells contaminated by PFOA were identified
- A Potential Responsible Party (PRP) was identified in each community.
- Service to each community differed
 - Litchfield
 - All water is purchased from a municipal utility.
 - Purchased water has “trace” levels of PFOA
 - Public willing to accept water quality but objected to paying for water, pressure and terms of service
 - Amherst
 - All water from Pennichuck
 - Pennichuck water has “trace” to Non Detect levels of PFOA
 - Public willing to accept water quality but objects to paying for water and concerned over high pressure

PFOA Impact on Pennichuck

– Bedford

- All water is purchased from a municipal utility.
- Two of six wells from this municipal utility were contaminated with PFOA over 70 ppt.
- Prior to contaminated municipal wells being shut down the PFOA levels were around 50 ppt
- After municipal wells shut down PFOA levels are around 20 ppt
- Public did not want water from existing municipal provider.
- PRP only willing to pay for connection to existing municipal utility. The public is demanding connection to different municipal provider with "0" PFOA. Cost to connect to municipality is 2.7 million greater than connection to existing municipal utility.
- Pennichuck's existing Bedford customers (382), who are currently receiving water from existing municipal provider, are also demanding that PWW switch suppliers. Cost of PWW an additional 1.7 million to 3.7 million..

PFOA Impact on Pennichuck

- Public is demanding investment by Pennichuck to provide higher quality water than required by regulations.
 - Slippery slope
 - Other known contaminants exist at low levels in water below established Safe Drinking Water Standards
 - Disinfection Byproducts, Arsenic, Uranium
 - If water meets standards is there a justification to invest to meet public's demand for "0"?
- Loss of Public Confidence
 - Flint has fueled lack of trust in Utilities and Regulators.
 - Initial lack of standard by Regulators
 - Public information on Health effects varies
 - EPA and States have established varying standards
 - Public wants "0". No acceptable level of risk.
 - Threatened class action law suits

PFOA Impact on Pennichuck

- The brewing public crisis created by Emerging Contaminants
 - What was “0” just years ago is now detectable. Better lab equipment is fueling public concern.
 - Emerging Contaminants are not regulated and generally health effects are not well understood.
 - Wide range of data on emerging contaminants, some backed by science and some by fake news.
 - Utilities are expected to provide water that meets regulatory standard which is often different than the public’s demands for water with “0” levels of contamination
 - Contrary to public opinion the cost of treating all water to a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal Of Zero is more than the public can afford.
 - The “vocal” public believes no risk is acceptable.
 - The public believes the cost of treatment should be borne by the Utility.

Questions ???

Thank you.