WSSCWATER DELIVERING THE ESSENTIAL

FACT SHEET

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals that were developed in the 1940s to be fire, oil, grease, water and stain resistant. The chemicals are found in a wide array of consumer and industrial products, including non-stick cookware, stain repellant, dental floss, cleaning products and cosmetics. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the potential for health effects from PFAS in humans is not well understood. For more information about PFAS, check out the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) site: www.epa.gov/pfas.

How do these compounds get in the environment?

Some of the most common means of PFAS entering the environment are discharges from PFAS manufacturing and processing facilities, and from facilities that use the product in large quantities, such as airports and military installations. Two of the most common compounds, PFOA and PFOS, have been the most extensively produced chemicals and are very persistent in the human body and environment – meaning they accumulate over time and don't break down. Once discharged into the environment and into source water, PFAS compounds cannot be removed during the water treatment process. Fortunately, there are no known PFAS-contaminated sites located upstream of WSSC Water drinking water sources.

Are these compounds regulated by federal/state governments?

There are currently no federal or state regulations mandating the monitoring or treatment of PFAS. The EPA does maintain a health advisory of 70 parts per trillion for two of the most common compounds, PFOA and PFOS. Currently, this is the only Federal health standard. One part per trillion is equivalent to one drop of water. in 20 olympic-sized swimming pools.

Your water is safe

WSSC Water has an aggressive water quality testing program - performing 500,000 laboratory tests per year to ensure safety and superior water quality. WSSC Water has never had a drinking water quality violation in its more than 101-year history. Regarding PFAS, WSSC Water conducted extensive water quality testing for six PFAS compounds, from July 2013 through April 2014 and again from March 2015 through October 2017, and found no detectable levels of these contaminants in our drinking water supply. Results are posted at www.wsscwater.com/pfas.

On January 24, 2020, WSSC Water announced it will resume testing its water for the presence of PFAS substances at its Potomac and Patuxent Water Filtration Plants. These two plants provide drinking water to 1.8 million residents in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. This proactive measure goes above and beyond federal and state requirements. WSSC Water will test quarterly for 18 different PFAS compounds using a new analytical method developed and approved by EPA. Test results will be posted at www.wsscwater.com/pfas.

Given the challenges of removing PFAS, the most effective way to limit their occurrence in drinking water is by regulating upstream polluters. In making the announcement to resume testing, WSSC Water General Manager and CEO Carla A. Reid strongly encouraged continued federal and state action to protect drinking water supplies. WSSC Water will continue to closely monitor the national discussion on the need for possible federal PFAS testing and the progress of scientific knowledge on this issue.

If you have additional questions about water quality, call 301-206-4002.