



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Health and Community Services Department



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Announcement of Additional PFAS Site in Kalamazoo County

KALAMAZOO, MI – The City of Portage, in collaboration with the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), will hold an informational briefing the week of February 10th on results and next steps in the ongoing testing for PFAS contamination in the area of a former landfill in the City of Portage. The exact date, time and location of the meeting will be announced next week.

South Westnedge Park (9010 South Westnedge Avenue) was previously used as a municipal landfill. The City of Portage conducted groundwater clean-up activities at the property until 1999. Since then the city has voluntarily conducted extensive testing in and around the landfill site to identify any contamination that may be present to ensure that no adverse environmental impacts are occurring in the community. All testing has been performed by a highly-qualified environmental consulting firm retained by the City of Portage, American Hydrogeology Corporation (AHC).

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination was initially discovered at the site in May 2019, in conjunction with ongoing groundwater monitoring activities. The city began testing for PFAS at that time out of an abundance of caution because PFAS had been added to the list of contaminants of concern by EGLE. Following up on the initial testing of May 2019, additional sampling was performed in the fall of 2019 that identified PFAS contamination potentially migrating beyond the boundaries of the site. As a result, as required by Part 201 of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, the City of Portage provided notice to 103 affected down gradient property owners between November 25 and December 17, 2019.

The city is continuing its investigation of PFAS contamination that may be emanating from the former landfill site. The residents within the potentially affected area and who rely on private wells for their potable water needs are being contacted by the City of Portage, EGLE and Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department. PFAS sampling of twenty-five residential water wells near the site of contamination began this week and should be completed by January 31, 2020. It is anticipated residential water well test results will be

received within two weeks. The PFAS water test results will provide home owners that rely on an on-site water wells valuable water quality information and will direct our next steps.

At present time, there are no test results showing PFAS in private drinking water wells near the investigation testing site and quarterly testing of municipal drinking water continue to meet water quality standards for PFAS.

EGLE performs quarterly testing of the municipal drinking water system in Portage and has found no detections of PFAS exceeding current US EPA recommendations Lifetime Health Advisory or the more stringent drinking water standards being considered by the State of Michigan. Residents who are on city municipality water (meaning they receive a monthly water bill from the City of Portage) are not affected by this potential PFAS site. These results are available on the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) web site: <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/>.

Most homes and businesses that are near the contamination site are serviced by municipal water provided by the City of Portage and should be assured that their water meets or exceeds standards set forth by the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act.

As discussed above, it is not believed that there are any concerns with drinking water in Portage homes connected to municipal water and the city is conducting PFAS testing of all private wells in the vicinity of the former landfill site. PFAS substances are part of a group of chemicals used globally during the past century in manufacturing, firefighting and thousands of common household and other consumer products. Boiling water will not remove PFAS. Common residential filters do not treat PFAS. Swallowing PFAS is the primary way it can get into your body. Touching the water is not considered a health concern as PFAS does not move easily through skin. You can bathe, do your dishes, launder your clothes and clean with water that has PFAS in it. It is advised that farm animals and pets do not drink the water.

Updates, including maps and test results, will be provided through the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) website: <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/> and included in the Kalamazoo County Water Quality Updates released by the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department. Residents can also follow www.facebook.com/KalamazooCountyHCS/ or visit www.kalcounty.com/hcs/pfasresponse.php.

