

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NORTHCENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

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IN RE: BENNER TOWNSHIP PFAS Investigation HSCA SITE

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BEFORE: JARED DRESSLER, Hearing Officer,
Acting Regional Director
DANIEL THETFORD, Acting Assistant
Regional Director
RANDY FARMERIE, Program Manager
CHERYL J. SINCLAIR, Environmental
Group Manager

HEARING: June 28, 2022
6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Benner Township Municipal Building
1224 Buffalo Run Road
Bellefonte, PA 16823

SPEAKERS: John Ciccone, Terry Cable, David Roberts,
Rick Wier, Roland Ferris, Nancy Cordbaron, John
Costas

Reporter: Matthew Ford

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HEARING OFFICER: Good evening. My name's Jared Dressler. I'm the Acting Regional Director with the Department of Environmental Protection's Northcentral Regional Office in Williamsport and I'll be serving as the Hearing Officer for this evening. Thank you all for coming and a special thanks to Benner Township for use of the building and being hospitable.

I would like to introduce my colleagues tonight, also from DEP's Northcentral Regional Office. We have Dan Thetford, Acting Assistant Regional Director. Randy Farmerie, Program Manager for the Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program. Cheryl Sinclair, our Environmental Group Manager, Environmental Cleanup and Brownsfield Program. And John Ciccone, Geoscientist in our Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program.

A little background, the Northcentral Regional Office is one of six DEP Regional Offices and our role is to implement DEP-wide policies, procedures and regulatory programs for 14 counties, which includes Centre County. Our purpose tonight

1 is to hold a formal public hearing for DEP's
2 Northcentral Regional Staff to hear testimony from
3 the public about the ongoing Benner Township PFAS
4 Investigation. Specifically, this hearing pertains
5 to the Department's proposed prompt interim response
6 to mitigate PFAS through the investigation site
7 area.

8 Please note that this hearing is not
9 intended to cover statewide PFAS policy. If you
10 would like to speak, and have not already signed up,
11 please go to the table and signup now, or if there
12 is - that is not a signup sheet for attendance, that
13 is a signup sheet if you'd like to speak. So if
14 anyone signed it and did not want to speak, they can
15 take it off, if anybody would like.

16 One point I will make, in addition to
17 the opportunity to testify this evening, you may
18 also submit written comments via email or mail no
19 later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, August 26th of this
20 year. If you would like to submit written
21 testimony, please pick up one of the fact sheet
22 handouts from the sign-in table in the back. It
23 will tell you a little bit more information. The
24 DEP gives equal consideration to all public
25 comments, regardless of whether a comment is

1 received verbally tonight or in writing prior to the
2 deadline. Those who speak tonight may also submit
3 written comments at any length they so choose.

4 Please note that our purpose here
5 tonight is to listen to your comments and gather
6 input on DEP's proposed prompt interim response
7 action. DEP staff are not going to answer questions
8 or respond to any comments during this formal
9 proceeding. All comments given tonight or morning
10 by the deadline will be addressed by DEP after the
11 close of the public comment phase in what's called a
12 comment and response document.

13 Before we begin testimony, John
14 Ciccone is going to provide a brief presentation of
15 the investigation to date.

16 MR. CICCONE: So good evening,
17 everybody. Thank you for coming. It looks like we
18 have a full house. That's great.

19 So I'll be giving a brief presentation
20 on the Benner Township PFAS HSCS Site Investigation.
21 So right off the bat, we already have two acronyms
22 that I'd like to point out. PFAS or PFAS (changes
23 pronunciation), which stands for Per - o
24 polyfluoroalkyl substances and then HSCA, we throw
25 it around, but it stands for the Hazardous Sites

1 Cleanup Act, that's the program that I work in. So
2 that's what those two acronyms stand for.

3 So on our Agenda tonight, we'll be
4 hitting three topics. I'll be discussing the
5 background of the investigation and some of the
6 results that we've gotten thus far. We will discuss
7 the response alternatives that we've kind of
8 brainstormed and the prompt interim response that
9 we've decided to pursue. And then we will follow up
10 with taking public comments from anyone who wanted
11 to sign up and provide some.

12 So this slide provides pretty general
13 background on the investigation so far, as well as
14 the background on these PFAS compounds. PFAS is a
15 family of compounds that has hundreds, if not
16 thousands of compounds within the family, and the
17 two compounds that we have detected contaminating
18 groundwater and some portions of the investigation
19 area are perfluorooctane sulfonic acid or PFOS
20 because that's a mouthful, or perfluorooctanoic
21 acid, also referred to as PFOA.

22 As mentioned, a PFAS, as a family it
23 comprises - it's comprised of many others and we
24 have detected others, but these two are the ones
25 that we'll be focusing on because it's what we have

1 data for, what we have standing for. So PFAS is
2 present in commercial, industrial and residential
3 products. So you can think of Teflon cookware,
4 Stainmaster carpeting for example, and firefighting
5 foams contain these compounds. So it's found in a
6 wide variety of products.

7 So currently, PFOA, PFOS has a health
8 advisory limit of 70 parts per trillion, which was
9 put in place by the EPA for drinking water. The
10 State of Pennsylvania adopted this to serve as our
11 cleanup - or groundwater cleanup standard and we
12 refer to that as our MSC, so when you see MSC, that
13 refers to the Pennsylvania's Groundwater Cleanup
14 Standard.

15 As some of you may be aware, about two
16 weeks ago, EPA issued new interim health advisory
17 limits for PFOA, PFOS, which are mentioned here,
18 PFOS new interim HAL is four parts per quadrillion
19 and PFOA being 20 parts for quadrillion. I'd like
20 to note that we are aware that these numbers are
21 much more stringent than the 70 parts per trillion,
22 and we are awaiting finalized statewide directives
23 of how to proceed. So we are aware of the new
24 interim HAL. We're just waiting for directive on
25 how to move forward statewide.

1 So the investigation is funded through
2 HSCA funding, and its purpose was to find the extent
3 of the groundwater contamination plume, identify
4 potential and any receptors and determine any
5 potential sources for the contamination.

6 So some of you might have seen this
7 map before. It's up on our webpage and probably
8 updated as frequently as we have updates for it. It
9 provides an approximate parcel map of locations that
10 we have sampled potable water supply at and it's
11 color-coded to represent locations that are either
12 above the MSC, below it are not sampled or locations
13 that were sampled by a third party and had below the
14 entity. It's a little hard to make out here on the
15 - on the screen, but we have a printout over on this
16 side and as I mentioned, you can view it on our
17 webpage as well. I'll reiterate that this was last
18 updated the end of May and when we refer to the MSC,
19 we are referring to the 70 parts per trillion for
20 both PFOA and PFOS combined.

21 So within our investigation area, we
22 have sampled 58 water supplies and of those, 14 have
23 been found to have a concentration of PFOS and PFOA
24 above 70 parts per trillion, the 14 water supplies
25 are considered impacted. Of those 14, ten

1 residential homes were identified and did not have
2 effective water treatment that would be able to
3 filter these compounds out. So we have provided
4 bottled water and are in the process of having
5 effective water treatment systems you saw at these
6 homes.

7 In order to get to the point where we
8 began delivering the bottled water and the process
9 to install these treatment systems, we had to create
10 an analysis of alternatives to determine which
11 response would best address the contamination we're
12 seeing. So we consider the bottled water in the
13 treatment systems to be that prompt interim response
14 and that is why we're here and what you'll be
15 providing comment on. Additionally, we had sent out
16 letters to potential responsible parties asking them
17 to provide information on any activities or
18 processes that may have taken place on their
19 property that could release PFAS into the
20 environment.

21 So throughout the rest of this summer,
22 summer of 2022, these are the activities that we are
23 planning on completing. We plan to continue
24 compound sampling, whether that be resampling wells
25 that have already been sampled or to sample levels

1 for individuals that are reaching out to us that may
2 had been outside of our investigation scope. We are
3 - given the new interim HAL and depending on the
4 finalized statewide directives, we'll continue
5 evaluating residences based on any changes that
6 interim HAL may have on our MSC.

7 We do plan to perform soil sampling,
8 both surface and subsurface soil sampling and
9 additional areas of concern, including detention
10 basins located on the airport property. And then a
11 little later on, we do plan to perform - do a
12 physical investigating, as well as the installation
13 of monitoring wells from which we'll be able to grab
14 groundwater samples, which we'll likely be doing on
15 a quarterly basis, if not a different type of
16 timeframe for that.

17 So I mentioned before, the term prompt
18 interim response. So we are considering the
19 delivery of bottled water and the installation of a
20 treatment system to be our prompt interim response.
21 Anytime HSCA takes a prompt interim response, we are
22 required to host a public hearing in order to, you
23 know, document the process, as well as take public
24 comments. And so that's why we're here today. And
25 this prompt interim response is not our final

1 response. Additional prompt interim responses may
2 follow, or there may be what's called a final
3 response, which sounds, you know, just as what it
4 is, a final response. Each additional prompt
5 interim response or final response would necessitate
6 a public hearing much like this.

7 So there were six, I guess you could
8 call them categories that we needed to consider when
9 brainstorming these alternatives; how effective
10 would it be at mitigating exposure to these
11 contaminants. Is the timeframe of the response, is
12 it - could we consider short term, long term? How
13 quick could it be implemented. How reliable the
14 response is. How feasible it would be to implement,
15 and of course, costs and community and municipal
16 support for, you know, whichever response that we
17 are considering.

18 These are the four responses that, you
19 know, it can be quickly, you know, brainstormed.
20 Option one; we take no action. Two; we could supply
21 the residents with information on, you know, our
22 findings and say, hey, go find a treatment system,
23 have at it. Three being to supply bottled water, or
24 four, having the DEP install point-of-entry
25 treatment systems.

1 I would like to note that any of these
2 responses that we take, it would still necessitate
3 that an environmental covenant be placed on
4 properties that we have identified having
5 groundwater contamination. The reason for that is,
6 it's both to protect the health and legal
7 liabilities of the current and future homeowners.

8 This matrix here shows the breakdown
9 of the categories, versus the different types of
10 responses that we could take. As you can tell, no
11 action doesn't really solve anything. It's not a
12 realistic response. Having homeowners install
13 treatment systems checks a few of the boxes.
14 However, reliability is questionable and that would
15 also mean that the homeowners would incur the cost
16 of installation, as well as maintenance for the
17 systems.

18 Number three being bottled water. It
19 does check a lot of the boxes, however, that's -
20 it's not - it's an unrealistic permanent solution,
21 especially when you consider that having bottled
22 water delivered is - it's fine for drinking
23 purposes, but for bathing or cooking, it's
24 frustrating to say the least. And then when you
25 consider option four, that checks nearly - well,

1 pretty much all the boxes. However, I would
2 probably add that in that permanent column or row
3 there, one little act that I would add is that it
4 would take time to get these treatment systems
5 installed.

6 So for that reason, our proposed
7 prompt interim response would be a combination of
8 both option three and four. So provide the impacted
9 homeowners with drinking water in the form of
10 bottled waters until we can get an effective
11 treatment system installed in their home.

12 And again, given any changes to the
13 Standard, we will continually be reevaluating who
14 needs to have bottled water delivered to them and a
15 treatment system offered to them for installation.
16 So given three and four being the prompt interim
17 response that we would like to pursue, we've
18 implemented it by having bottled water delivered to
19 ten of the impacted homeowners that we've
20 identified. We have sent out access agreements for
21 the installation of these point-of-entry treatment
22 systems to the impacted homeowners. We're in the
23 process of receiving those access agreements back
24 and we will be forwarding them to our contractor.
25 We'll then go through the process of reaching out to

1 you folks in order to come and, you know, go look at
2 your plumbing, the electrical, the sizing in order
3 to draft up a treatment system that is adequate and
4 suitable to your property.

5 Not to throw Cheryl under the bus, but
6 if you had any questions or requests for further
7 information, this is Cheryl Sinclair's information,
8 her phone number and email address. We also do have
9 a project website that we try to update rather
10 routinely, maybe once a month, twice a month or more
11 frequently given if we have rapid updates to
12 actually be provided.

13 And that wraps the presentation up.
14 Thank you for your time.

15 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, John, I
16 would put another - I would put a plug in for the
17 website. Cheryl, John, and staff done an excellent
18 job of trying to keep - of trying to keep
19 information fed to that website as routinely as
20 possible. So I saw folks taking pictures of the
21 slides.

22 MR. CICCONE: Oh, do you want me to
23 leave that up for you?

24 HEARING OFFICER: It's out. It's on
25 the fact sheet. It's on the fact sheet. I have a

1 comment to hear later, but you can pretty much
2 Google DEP Benner Township, it pretty much comes
3 right up.

4 MR. CICCONE: We will be posting the
5 whole website, so -.

6 HEARING OFFICER: I think it might
7 already -.

8 MR. CICCONE: Yeah, if not, it will be
9 this week.

10 HEARING OFFICER: Correct.

11 So the slideshow will be on that
12 website. So again, we're trying to be as absolutely
13 transparent as possible, getting information out as
14 quickly as we can. Obviously, this is evolving
15 issues. So again, thank you, John.

16 So with that, we will now begin the
17 formal public hearing on the Benner Township PFAS
18 investigation and before we take comments from the
19 public, I'd like to go over a few ground rules.
20 First, please turn off your cellphones and put them
21 on vibrate. I will call on people to speak in the
22 order in which they signed up. When your name is
23 called, please approach the microphone, say your
24 name and give your comments. Please speak loudly
25 and speak into microphone so everyone can you hear

1 you, including the stenographer.

2 Let me check on thing.

3 Okay.

4 The office says for each person, do
5 about three minutes. We don't have a lot of
6 commenters, so we can move that. What we'll do is
7 we'll move it to five minutes. We can allow - each
8 person will be allowed five minutes to offer
9 testimony. We will keep the time, hold a warning
10 sign as the speaker approaches the end of their time
11 so you're aware where you're at. And please be
12 respectful of everyone's opportunity to speak and to
13 be heard. Don't interrupt while others are speaking
14 by clapping, booing or speaking out of turn. Thank
15 you for your cooperation with these ground rules.

16 Our first registered speaker is Terry
17 Cable, and Terry will be followed by David Roberts,
18 Rick Wier and Roland Ferris. Terry, if you are
19 ready,

20 MR. CABLE: Hi, I'm Terry Cable. Some
21 people I know, some I don't, been neighbors for a
22 long time. Several of us met and decided to put
23 some type of response on a public record. John
24 Costas, Kevin Albright and myself met and we come up
25 with this list and submitted it to the residents for

1 their approval and we didn't receive any negative
2 comments back. So this is what I prepared and what
3 we came up with for the public record.

4 To the PA DEP Hearing, Tuesday, June
5 28th, from the concerned residents of Walnut Grove
6 Estates in the surrounding Benner Township PFAS
7 expanded investigation area, below are a list of
8 questions and concerns about the current PA DEP
9 response. One is identifying the recipients for the
10 PA DEP prompt interim response.

11 Many residents are still waiting on
12 initial well test results in order to be able to
13 access the prompt interim response resources
14 provided by PA DEP. That is bottled water, whole-
15 house filtration and public water. It is my
16 understanding that there was an issue with the
17 laboratories used for testing. When will the well
18 test results be available? Are the completed
19 residential well tests results invalid? Or is there
20 an issue with the previous laboratory's test
21 results? How does the PA DEP intend to respond to
22 the updated guidelines lower than the EPA's Health
23 Advisory Level of 70 parts per trillion.

24 New EPA interim guidelines, and I took
25 this from a site that said it was going to be four

1 parts per trillion for both PFOA and PFOS, and that
2 is what I have in this submittal. Including two new
3 chemicals, BFBS and GenX. Any exposure to these
4 chemicals would indicate a health risk to the
5 residents and that includes nearly all the wells
6 tested and a newly expanded Benner Township PFAS
7 investigation area.

8 Given that the newly-expanded Benner
9 Township PA DEP has based its action on a previous
10 non-enforceable EPA Guideline of 70 parts per
11 trillion, how will the EPA's new interim guidelines
12 impact the proposed new enforceable standard in
13 Pennsylvania at 14 parts per trillion for PFOA and
14 18 parts per trillion for PFOS? Including new
15 chemicals - I'm sorry - in the expanded area, given
16 that the PA DEP has based its actions on its
17 previous guideline, -.

18 Okay.

19 I'll start here. Given that the PA
20 DEP has based its actions on a previous non-
21 enforceable EPA Guideline of 70 parts per trillion,
22 how will the EPA's new interim guidelines impact the
23 proposed new enforceable standard in Pennsylvania of
24 14 parts per trillion in PFOA and 18 parts per
25 trillion for PFOS for these residents during this

1 prompt interim response period?

2 Given the recently updated guidelines
3 from the EPA, that is four parts per trillion, is it
4 possible to make bottled water and whole-house
5 treatment available to all residents within the
6 newly-expanded Benner Township PFAS investigation
7 area?

8 While we wait for Pennsylvania to
9 adopt an enforceable MCL level of 14 parts per
10 trillion, 18 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS
11 respectively, many of my neighbors were not included
12 in the DEP's current efforts. In addition, it is my
13 understanding that at least one well has
14 demonstrated variability of PFAS levels from one
15 testing date to another. The GAT-1 Well was tested
16 on June 19, 2020 with PFAS results total combined of
17 73 parts per trillion and then it was tested again
18 on August 6th, 2020 with a result of 116 parts per
19 trillion. Several residents would be over the 70
20 parts per trillion if future tests had similar
21 fluctuation and results.

22 Because of the changing standards at
23 the federal and state levels, the variability of
24 test results and PA DEP's current inability to
25 provide prompt test results to the residents, it

1 seems reasonable to offer this interim response to
2 all residents within the newly-expanded Benner
3 Township PFAS Investigation Area.

4 Information on whole-house water
5 treatment systems and the cost incurred to
6 residents. One resident received an email
7 indicating a whole-house filtration system
8 installation path or point-of-entry water treatment,
9 which is an acronym, POET, the system will be
10 developed in the next few weeks. My understanding
11 is that residents above 70 parts per trillion will
12 be receiving regular carbon POET systems. After
13 installation, PA DEP will then cover the expense for
14 testing the POET to verify the system produces safe
15 drinking water.

16 HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Cable, -

17 MR. CABLE: Coverage -.

18 HEARING OFFICER: - do you have quite
19 a bit left or -?

20 MR. CABLE: It's not that much.

21 HEARING OFFICER: All right.

22 MR. CABLE: Coverage of all expenses
23 including bends to the system will be either A,
24 covered by identified party responsible or B,
25 covered by PA DEP for a two-year period after which

1 residents will be responsible for these costs. The
2 POET system has no ability to measure the effective
3 and ongoing safe treatment. That requires water
4 testing. What time period is reasonable after a
5 POET system is installed to confirm laboratory water
6 sample is at or below the acceptable safe drinking
7 water standards if facilities are not available to
8 do the testing now? How do I know if my whole-house
9 filtration system is failing without a PFAS
10 laboratory sample? Who is responsible for disposing
11 of the contaminated filters or the granulated
12 carbon?

13 Residents falling below 20 - the 70
14 parts per trillion on initial round of water testing
15 are requesting information about the POET system
16 with a detailed summary of how these systems are
17 safety maintained, costs associated with the
18 installation water testing to ensure the systems are
19 functioning and time intervals for required water
20 testing to determine if there's a contaminated
21 filter. Some residents want to install POET
22 filtration systems at their own - at their own
23 expense for wells that tested positive PFAS that
24 fall under the HAL of 70 parts per trillion.

25 What information can you currently

1 provide regarding identifying and securing public
2 water and public sewer for the neighborhood?
3 Ultimately, we see as the only option to ensure safe
4 drinking water for residents and to ensure that
5 these chemicals are not reentering the water table
6 through septic drain fields that are already
7 contaminated with PFOS.

8 Residents are highly concerned about
9 the potential and evitable downgrading of property
10 values due to PFOS. GTAC7 Benner Township Due
11 Diligence Summary Report of June of 2021 has
12 confirmed the source of PFAS at the University Park
13 Airport. Once the Pennsylvania Army, Air Force
14 National Guard Battalion is also a source and it
15 appears a source has been identified.

16 What actions, if any, will PA DEP take
17 to identify the source of contamination of HALS or
18 PFOS? And three, people with concern are the
19 residents, the knowledge that we have been living
20 with PFOS undetected and the potential health
21 implications of elevated levels in our bloodstream
22 are unknown. That is why blood serum testing be
23 conducted for all residents, family members,
24 significant others, et cetera, to establish PFOS
25 blood serum baseline for those within the newly-

1 expanded Benner Township PFOS investigation area.

2 Was PFOS discovered anywhere around
3 the airport prior to 2 of '19? Have there been any
4 soil samples tested? And if so, when, where and
5 what were the results? Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Mr.
7 Cable.

8 One point I will make, again, we've
9 mentioned it before, and if you want to jump in real
10 quick, written comments, they hold the same weight.
11 So they're absolutely appreciated, but if anyone is
12 going to - if you think your written - your verbal
13 comments are going to go exceptionally long, we just
14 want to make sure everybody understands we do accept
15 written comments. They hold the same weight. That
16 gives us the opportunity to sit down and digest it.

17 All right.

18 Next, we have David Roberts.

19 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you. My name is
20 David Roberts. I'm a resident in Benner Township
21 and I thank you for the opportunity to comment.

22 The Benner Township PFOS Investigation
23 Area is currently poorly studied in that it's not
24 been clearly defined. There needs to be an expanded
25 investigation area as part of the interim response

1 and more importantly, as part of a long-term final
2 response. Additional water, soil and air test data
3 is needed, along with information on test sites,
4 offer for test steps, offer for geological and
5 hydrogeological properties, surface water samples,
6 PFOS tests within University Park Airport, storm
7 water and wastewater retention areas, expanded soil
8 tests across the impacted area and investigations of
9 historic contamination events to more clearly define
10 the extent of the groundwater plume soil
11 contamination, excuse me, and surface water
12 contamination and to establish a science-based
13 investigation of the remediation zone in Benner
14 Township.

15 It's interim PFOS removal devices must
16 be provided for all residential, commercial and
17 industrial water levels contaminated with PFOS. The
18 use of contaminated well water at businesses that
19 discharge wastewater into the sanitary sewer, allows
20 PFOS compounds to enter the local wastewater stream
21 and into bio-solids that are used locally for crop
22 and field fertilization. PFOS may also enter local
23 surface waters through wastewater plant effluent
24 discharges. And PFOS has been detected in Spring
25 Creek and in Bald Eagle Creek.

1 Over three years that the lab sent the
2 initial detection of PFOS contamination, interim and
3 long-term remediation must now be rapidly and
4 vigorously implanted within a clearly-defined zone.
5 Benner Township residents and local environmental
6 groups, such as the Sierra Club and the Nittany
7 Valley Environmental Coalition are very concerned
8 with the extent of the plume and request expanded
9 PFOS testing in multiple areas.

10 Now, these new EPA guidelines are
11 based on rigorous science studies established - and
12 they have established greatly-reduced PFAS limits,
13 and these are in order to protect public health from
14 the negative health outcomes caused by exposure to
15 these toxic PFOA and PFOS chemicals. The new EPA
16 Advisory Limits reduce the old 70 parts per trillion
17 limits by several magnitudes. This is a huge
18 reduction. And the new health advisory are .004
19 parts per trillion for PFOA and .02 parts per
20 trillion for PFOS.

21 In order to adequately protect public
22 health for our neighbors, families and children, the
23 DEP interim response measures must now recognize and
24 adopt a new EPA lifetime drinking water health
25 advisories in Benner Township.

1 There's an evident need for water
2 treatment systems to be provided at all well supply
3 - water supply wells within this impacted, Big
4 Hollow community and the local commercial sites when
5 the contamination levels are now viewed through the
6 lens of these new EPA guidelines. It's apparent
7 that not all affected properties, businesses and
8 families have received PFAS tests or test results.
9 PFAS testing must be expedited and expanded. Local
10 residents had been exposed to toxic level of PFAS
11 for years, if not decades. A more prompt-prompt
12 response is needed.

13 We all have concerns about the costs
14 of installation of either points of source treatment
15 or of, you know, something like a public water
16 supply lines being put in. And so there must be
17 financial liability for these things by the
18 agencies, businesses and institutions that
19 introduced this PFAS into our environment in the
20 first place.

21 So the Benner Township Due Diligence
22 Report that's been talked about here, clearly
23 defines the University Park Airport, which is owned
24 and operated by Penn State University as a source of
25 aqueous fire-fighting foam, which is a PFAS

1 contaminant.

2 And I ask for mitigation or
3 remediation of this PFAS contamination, not only by
4 our tax-funded agencies, but by Penn State
5 University and University Park Airport. Billions of
6 dollars of infrastructure money is available to
7 mitigate PFAS. This is part of the new federal
8 infrastructure bill, and some of it's been
9 specifically earmarked for PFAS mitigation.

10 So I ask DEP and Pennsylvania to help
11 finance this, you know, by seeking out grants from
12 the federal government. And now, there's PFAS
13 removal treatments such as carbon filtration.
14 There's also reverse osmosis and ion exchange, they
15 leave behind concentrated PFOS contaminants that
16 must be handled, disposed of as hazardous waste.
17 Alternative new technologies are being tested that
18 completely breakdown PFAS without the production of
19 any concentrated PFAS waste.

20 One of these techniques, and I -
21 again, these are just being under development. One
22 of these techniques can pull the groundwater out by
23 pumping, put through a treatment system that uses
24 ultraviolet light, iodine and a sulfite compound,
25 which then completely breaks down the PFAS. This

1 water can then be returned to the ground and through
2 a long term process, it can actually take this
3 contamination out of the ground water.

4 HEARING OFFICER: You're close to five
5 minutes.

6 MR. ROBERTS: Sure.

7 Okay.

8 There's another technique being
9 developed that uses just a high energy called a
10 vacuum ultraviolet light to which will also
11 completely breakdown these compounds. Now, I want
12 to make clear, this is not a household UV system. A
13 household UV system will not breakdown PFAS.

14 So I ask for DEP and Benner Township
15 to ensure that Penn State follows all environmental
16 laws and regulations to control and remediate this
17 contamination, and I ask Penn State to acknowledge
18 their responsibility and duty to implement
19 comprehensive mitigation and remediation to remove
20 this contamination that's occurred through the use
21 of firefighting foams at the airport.

22 I ask DEP to protect all families,
23 downstream communities, environments impacted by the
24 PFAS and to seriously consider these comments and to
25 implement measures necessary to accurately define

1 the extent of the plume and the many downstream PFAS
2 impacts. As a resident of Benner Township, I wish
3 to see my friends and neighbors protected from PFAS
4 contamination and the negative health effects of
5 long-term PFAS. I believe that permanent removal of
6 PFAS from the groundwaters of Benner Township should
7 really be the ultimate goal of any mitigation or
8 remediation and I ask for Pennsylvania, again, to
9 request federal infrastructure grant money to
10 address contamination of Benner Township.

11 And finally, I wish to thank DEP for
12 holding this hearing and for your efforts to analyze
13 and mitigate PFAS contamination in Benner Township.
14 I also thank Benner Township Supervisors and their
15 staff for their efforts. There's much work to be
16 done and we must all pull together. Thank you.

17 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Mr.
18 Roberts. We now have Rick Wier.

19 MR. WIER: Yeah.

20 So I want to thank my neighbors for
21 addressing the group tonight more from a collective
22 standpoint. I want to talk to you a little bit
23 about my experience and how that connects with all
24 the other people who are in the same boat as I am.

25 So my name is Rick Wier. I live at

1 1835 Walnut Grove Drive. My water well was tested
2 twice by the DEP and the levels were 62 ppt and 53
3 ppt and PFAS contaminants were found in my water
4 supply. My perception of this process is that it
5 was rather lengthy.

6 Right? I think it's pretty natural I
7 find it lengthy given the fact that my own drinking
8 water has been potentially contaminated and they
9 have been so for a very long time. This is an
10 extremely important matter to me, and everybody here
11 is a homeowner, and not only due to my own personal
12 health concerns, but also an issue that impacts the
13 value of my home, our surrounding environment.

14 I understand the DEP has a very hard
15 job to do here and I trust they're performing to the
16 best of their ability. However, given the outside's
17 impact of this matter on all homeowners,
18 communications associated with the process, the
19 results, the outcome have not been consistent,
20 comprehensive nor timely.

21 Since my PFAS levels were on the
22 borderline of the 70 ppt limit, I have not received
23 some of the instruction from the DEP that other
24 homes with levels above the limit have received.
25 This is disappointing to me for several reasons.

1 First, I suspect that there are margins of errors
2 associated with any of these measurements. I don't
3 know what those margins of errors are. Furthermore,
4 I think all of my neighbors regardless of their
5 levels should have been formed directly as what the
6 DEP response would be, especially since this 70 ppt
7 limit is no longer being recommending by the EPA.

8 The DEP should scrap the 70 ppt limit
9 and embrace the reality that PFAS must be completely
10 eliminated from drinking water. Absent any
11 information from the DEP about near term
12 remediation, I got none because I was not over 70.
13 And given that my levels were sufficiently elevated,
14 I didn't want to wait any longer than necessary to
15 install a PFAS filtration system in my home. So I
16 didn't wait. In addition, I took this action to
17 install a filtration system in my home because the
18 DEP provided no information to me on a long-range
19 plan or series of options that are typically
20 considered as a solution to this kind of
21 contamination. I remain in the dark as to whether
22 or not it would be possible to have these
23 substantial expenses for this filtration system
24 reimbursed by the DEP or some other responsible
25 party if one is found.

1 I remain confused that the prompt
2 interim response would not include some form of
3 long-range set of impacts and options that
4 homeowners will have available to them so that
5 homeowner's can plan and take prompt action to
6 protect themselves. Furthermore, little information
7 has been provided by the DEP to indicate how will
8 the investigation seek evidence of the source of
9 contamination, who is the responsible party, who may
10 that be and how the source can be remediated. To
11 say that I'm disappointed in in the DEP in this
12 regard, would be a major understatement.

13 Finally, I'm not at all clear on how
14 this can be referred to as a prompt interim response
15 given that in 2019, almost three years ago, a high
16 level of PFAS contamination was found on the north
17 border of the University Park Airport. It stands to
18 reason, given the complex geology of the
19 investigation area, that a high probability of PFAS
20 contamination would exist along the southern border
21 of the airport as well. It is adjacent to a
22 residential neighborhood where all homes utilize
23 groundwater wells. It is beyond comprehension that
24 sampling in the neighborhood is not conducted
25 immediately in 2019 by the DEP, nor demanded by the

1 Benner Township Supervisors. Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER: All right.

3 The fourth commenter will be Roland
4 Ferris.

5 MR. FERRIS: Good evening, all, and
6 thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is
7 Roland Ferris. I represent Bobby Rahal Honda and
8 while we are not currently property owners in Benner
9 Township, we have a contract for a 48-acre farm,
10 which we hope to develop and it is being impacted by
11 a sewer that is impacted with the Walnut Grove. And
12 the more I started researching this, the more
13 concerned I got for the residents of Walnut Grove
14 with this PFAS issue and the amount of time it's
15 taken for it to be looked at.

16 My concerns about PFAS in this area,
17 independent of my general concerns of the homeowners
18 who have been drinking these chemicals are
19 specifically how PFAS found in this investigation
20 would impact future construction of sewer lines,
21 interrupting all the soil, because I think sewer
22 needs to be run to Walnut Grove, but we need, I
23 would think to be very careful about interrupting as
24 little soil as possible because most of that soil
25 has PFAS in it, and we don't want to be spreading it

1 further.

2 Okay?

3 My questions are, why no reduced
4 amount of sewer line? Why not reduce the amount of
5 sewer lines in that area when this does occur, thus,
6 reducing the disturbance with PFAS. Why wasn't the
7 public water considered in your examples of how to
8 resolve this, bringing public water into place? Is
9 there a widespread contamination of soils and would
10 specific testing be required for any earth-
11 disturbance activities in this area? There's quite
12 a bit of it going on at the airport right now. And
13 is all that dirt being tested because PFAS could be
14 spread airborne.

15 Would the soil removed during
16 excavation for sewer lines be a hazardous waste and
17 need to be disposed of, or could it be backfilled in
18 the ditches? Are there additional costs or concerns
19 that need to be addressed when constructing a PFAS -
20 when constructing in PFAS contaminated soils? What
21 costs or time delays should be expected for Benner
22 Township to provide planned sewer for this area?

23 In addition to the concerns specific
24 to ongoing planning for providing sewer to my
25 perspective property on Saddle Road. EPA recently

1 announced drinking water health advisories for PFAS
2 contamination in drinking water and a \$5 billion
3 grant over a five-year period of a billion dollars a
4 year to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants
5 in drinking water.

6 This is not just a local issue. PFAS
7 is huge. If you start researching PFAS, there's a
8 huge issue with Pittsburgh Airport on it. So
9 everybody is going to be reaching out for this
10 money, federal money, not just in PA, throughout the
11 whole country. We should get to the front of the
12 line.

13 Do these new lower health advisories
14 impact DEP's future actions in Benner Township?
15 Will the DEP or Pennsylvania or the HSCS apply for
16 this \$5 billion? Who will be the people applying
17 for it? And will any of the \$5 billion find its way
18 here to folks?

19 Again, my concerns are for these
20 homeowners. I think this is a very sad situation.
21 I understand there's some health issues in that
22 neighborhood, and I think the longer this goes on,
23 the more of them there will be. Thank you for your
24 time.

25 HEARING OFFICER: Let's see our sign-

1 up sheet. I think the next one is Nancy - I didn't
2 get your last name.

3 MS. CORDBARON: Yeah, Cordbaron.

4 HEARING OFFICER: Cordbaron.

5 MS. CORDBARON: Yes. I didn't really
6 prepare any remarks, but I just wanted to say how
7 important this is. This is water. This is what we
8 drink. This is what we wash our food with. This is
9 what we bathe in. Our numbers were below the 70
10 part per trillion, but I didn't trust that it was
11 okay. Like, how - who's saying, like, this much is
12 okay for me to drink? So I've been buying bottled
13 water. But it impacts everything. You don't know.
14 You're in the bathtub, your skin is porous. You
15 know, you're washing your teeth. You're giving
16 water to your dog, watering your vegetable garden.
17 You know, what's okay?

18 It's really, really upsetting and we
19 are not in Benner Township. We're in College
20 Township, so this is not just a Benner issue. We're
21 right on the edge here. But when the numbers - the
22 new numbers came out, I thought, okay, this is
23 great. This is great; we'll get some help, because
24 I've heard some people were getting, you know, water
25 treatment and bottled water, but we're not. And I

1 don't know if that will happen or when or how long.
2 I don't know who's making these decisions. I've -
3 it's just - it's just really, really upsetting.
4 Water is life, you know? And it's really forever.
5 It's not going to get better. It's not going to go
6 away. Thank you.

7 HEARING OFFICER: Rick Wier?

8 MR. WIER: Yeah. Already spoke.

9 HEARING OFFICER: Already spoke.

10 All right.

11 Did I miss anyone? There was a few
12 folks that are crossed out.

13 Okay.

14 With that, that will conclude
15 tonight's public hearing, unless there's someone
16 else who'd like to sign up?

17 MR. COSTAS: I'll sign up here or -.

18 Hello. My name is John Costas. I
19 would like to thank DEP for all their time and
20 effort that they have put into this investigation
21 and their continuing time and effort as the
22 investigation goes forward.

23 I would ask DEP to go beyond this
24 prompt interim response of ten homes that tested
25 above 70 parts per trillion and extend the response

1 to all residents that could be impacted by the
2 plume. I ask this due to the variability of test
3 results and the karst geology that underlies the
4 investigation are.

5 DEP has been testing the old chemical
6 burning site on Big Hollow Road since 2015 on a
7 quarterly basis for PFOA and PFOS. You had the data
8 from wet years to dry years on the variability of
9 the concentration of PFAS at this site. I was told
10 by DEP that the PFOA and PFOS concentrations have
11 been fairly consistent with respect to time. I do
12 not know how to quantify fairly, but I can assume
13 that the concentration has changed. How do you
14 explain to the resident of 1846 Walnut Grove Drive,
15 whose well came in at 69 parts per trillion, that
16 they are not entitled to the provisions of the
17 interim response due to not reaching the holy grail
18 of 70 parts per trillion?

19 State-of-the Art has been monitoring
20 their wells on a quarterly basis since the fall of
21 2019. Does their data show a variability in the
22 concentration of PFOA and PFOS? The most glaring
23 example of variability is the GAT-1 Well at the
24 University Park Airport. The well was tested
25 initially on June 19th, 2020 and a combined value of

1 PFOA and PFOS of 73 parts per trillion. The well
2 was tested again on August 6, 2020 with the result
3 being 116 parts per trillion. That is over a 40-
4 percent difference in two months. How do you
5 explain the discrepancy? Lab error? Rainy July?
6 Dry July? How do you explain to a homeowner that
7 their test result could be 40 percent different the
8 next time it is tested?

9 I believe there is still insufficient
10 data on how the plume is moving. I would like to
11 bring to your attention an incident that occurred to
12 a resident of Walnut Grove Estates. His well was
13 tested on May 26th, 2016 for 1, 2-dibromoethane or
14 EDB, for the result of 03.156 parts per billion,
15 which is three times over the OSHA standard of 0.05
16 parts per billion. Two weeks later, on June 9th,
17 2016, his well was tested again at 0.03 parts per
18 billion. How do you explain the discrepancy in such
19 a short timespan? Could resident's PFAS
20 concentrations rise and fall as quickly?

21 DEP has stated in this interim
22 response that their primary concern is for human
23 health of the residents and I applaud them for that.
24 I ask them to overlook an arbitrary number of 70
25 parts per trillion and provide revisions of this

1 interim response to all residents that could be
2 impacted by this PFAS plume. Thank you.

3 HEARING OFFICER: So with that, that
4 will include tonight's hearing. As a reminder,
5 again I'll reiterate, written comments will also be
6 accepted through Friday August 26, 2022. If you
7 wish to submit written comments or questions, please
8 take a handout from the table with the details.

9 Again, we've also created a webpage to
10 keep the public informed. It is located at
11 www.dep.pa.gov/BennerHSCA. And you can simply
12 Google DEP Benner Township and it will pop up. We
13 will continue to update this webpage periodically as
14 the investigation measures continue. And again, I
15 can't speak well enough for John and Cheryl for
16 recognition, they've done an excellent job of
17 keeping that information as we get it and try to put
18 it on there as fast as possible.

19 So please start there first. See if
20 you can get that information, and then if you have
21 questions, reach out. Thank you for being here.
22 Thank you for your comments, and we very much
23 appreciate your inputs in this matter.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One important
25 question. Has PFAS source material been removed

1 from the airport?

2 HEARING OFFICER: Well, at this point,
3 we're going to stop the hearing.

4 * * * * *

5 HEARING CONCLUDED

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I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, hearing held before Hearing Officer Jared Dressler was reported by me on 6/28/2022 and that I, Matthew Ford, read this transcript, and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Dated the 8 day of August, 2022



Matthew Ford, Court Reporter