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Gov. Peter Shumlin Provides New Statewide Perfluorinated Compound Testing Results

Montpelier—Gov. Peter Shumlin today shared results from the groundwater testing of perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) at two locations: IBM in Essex Junction, and the former Hercules Incorporated manufacturing facility in Colchester. The former Hercules site is on property now owned by Champlain Cable. The sites were included in a statewide testing plan for perfluorinated compounds due to the likelihood that PFOA and PFOS had been used in the manufacturing of semi-conductors or wire and cable coatings.

Results showed PFCs to be present in groundwater wells at both locations. All groundwater samples were collected from existing monitoring wells on the sites. Drinking water contamination is not a major concern at this time as there appear to be very few drinking water wells in the vicinity of the tested sites.

Eight out of 15 groundwater monitoring wells tested at the IBM site contained PFOA in concentrations ranging from 8 to 190 parts per trillion. Four wells contained concentrations of PFOS up to 120 parts per trillion. The health advisory level set by the Vermont Department of Health is a combined level of 20 parts per trillion for both chemicals. The testing showed that the contamination was confined to the IBM property itself as all downgradient groundwater wells did not contain any PFCs on site.

At the Hercules site in Colchester, all 12 groundwater monitoring wells contained PFOA in concentrations ranging from 77 to 7,200 parts per trillion. One groundwater monitoring well located outside of the property boundary did not show detectable concentrations of PFOA. PFOS was not detected in any samples at the Hercules site.

Residences and businesses surrounding the properties are primarily served by clean municipal water supplies. Preliminary estimates indicate there are no private drinking water wells within a one-mile radius of IBM, and fewer than 10 within a one-mile radius of the Hercules site. The Department of Environmental Conservation is confirming the number of active private wells in these areas, and will facilitate access to clean drinking water and water supply remediation should any be found.

Anyone who has a private drinking water well within a one-mile radius of either site should contact the Department of Environmental Conservation at (802) 828-1138. The Hercules site is located at 175 Hercules Drive, Colchester. The IBM site is located at 1000 River Street, Essex Junction.

Of the 11 sites originally part of the statewide PFC testing plan, results are in for all but one facility. The State is still waiting on results from groundwater collected at the former Harbour Industries property in Shelburne. Drinking water wells surrounding the site tested earlier this June were found to not be impacted by perfluorinated compounds.

The two other Statewide testing sites where PFOA and PFOS were detected include an underground storage tank at the Pittsford Fire Academy, and a groundwater collection trench at the Air National Guard Base in South Burlington. No private drinking water wells were impacted by either site.

The State has no plan to expand the testing of PFCs at this time. Precautionary testing will be required if information surfaces that indicates potential historic use of these compounds at any property.

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