



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



MELANIE LOYZIM
COMMISSIONER

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

December 15, 2021

Ms. Rebecca Hapgood, Town Manager
571 Lakewood Drive
China ME 04358

Re: Investigation of PFAS in China, Maine

Dear Ms. Hapgood,

This letter is to inform you that the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is initiating an investigation into the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from the land application of sludge and/or septage in China. This is part of the DEP's statewide investigation for the implementation of [2021 Public Law Chapter 478, An Act To Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater](#), effective October 18, 2021.

Sites have been identified based on DEP licensing information. To designate the approximate schedule for sampling, the DEP prioritized all sludge sites across the state into four Tiers (I, II, III, IV) based upon the following criteria:

- The anticipated presence of high levels of PFAS substances in sludge or septage applied at a location; and/or
- The volume of sludge or septage applied at a location; and/or
- The proximity of a site to drinking water supplies.

Please keep in mind that a site may include several physical locations and may also cross district, town, and county boundaries. Sites are based on decades of licensing information gathered, reviewed, and evaluated by the DEP. Tier I sites are anticipated to be sampled beginning December 2021 and will extend through 2022, possibly even into 2023.

The DEP is working closely with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) to identify sites with historical sludge application which are currently being used for the production of agricultural products. As a first step, DEP and DACF will work to verify application history and locations of spreading and stockpiles. DEP and DACF staff may reach out to municipalities to gather information that will help in our investigation. DEP will request permission to sample soils and groundwater from properties where sludge and/or septage may have been land applied. DEP will also request permission to sample and test drinking water supplies from individual homeowners in the direct vicinity of the site(s) for certain PFAS. The purpose of

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DEP's investigation is to identify sites statewide that are impacted by PFAS, identify drinking water supplies that are impacted above Maine's Interim Drinking Water Standard for PFAS, and provide impacted individuals with water that is below the standard.

DEP will share the sample results with DACF who may recommend modifications to farming practices based on a careful review of the data. DACF may also recommend additional sampling, including the testing of feed and other on-farm products, and the testing of additional soils to gain insight into any potential impacts that PFAS may have at farms.

PFAS are considered emerging contaminants and are not currently regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). As an interim step, U.S. EPA has established a Health Advisory Level of 70 parts per trillion in drinking water for the combined total of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), which are two of the most common forms of PFAS. In Maine however, emergency legislation became effective June 21, 2021, setting forth an interim drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion for the sum of six PFAS (PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFDA). [This is described in 2021 Public Law Chapter 82 Resolve, To Protect Consumers of Public Drinking Water by Establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for Certain Substances and Contaminants.](#) The DEP is using Maine's more stringent standard for its investigation.

We understand that you may have questions and concerns regarding our investigation. General questions about the investigation by DEP or that are being conveyed to you through your constituents should be directed to David Madore, Deputy Commissioner and Communications Director, David.Madore@maine.gov, 207-287-5842. You can also visit our webpage located at: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/index.html>.

Any questions about an investigation by DEP at a specific property should be directed to Jim Pollock at 207-592-8343 or jim.c.pollock@maine.gov

If you have agricultural-related questions, please contact Nancy McBrady, Director of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, Nancy.McBrady@maine.gov, 207-287-7522. Thank you for your assistance in this important investigation.

Sincerely,



Susanne Miller, Director
Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management

Copy: Tracy Kelly, DEP