

**GRAFTON WATER DISTRICT  
PRESS RELEASE  
JUNE 13, 2024**

**Board of Water Commissioners increase rates to pay for future PFAS water Treatment facilities.**

The Grafton Water District, Board of Water Commissioners, has been closely monitoring a family of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that have been detected in some public water supplies in Massachusetts and across the nation. PFAS were widely used in manufacturing, many consumer products, and firefighting foam. When discarded, PFAS leaches from these products and into water sources. The presence of PFAS is the result of pollution and not any action taken by our water system.

On Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that they have finalized a new Federal National Primary Drinking Water Rule for PFAS, which will apply to PWS across the country. EPA's Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFAS compounds, PFOA and PFOS, at 4 parts per trillion (ppt), and PFNA, PFHxS, and GenX Chemicals at 10 ppt, are quite a bit lower than the Massachusetts Maximum Contaminant Level of 20 ppt for the sum of six PFAS compounds, which is referred to as PFAS6. **The Grafton Water District has been monitoring for PFAS since the Massachusetts standard took effect and our results have been below the 20 Parts Per Trillion standard.**

Now that a EPA standard has been adopted the District is **required by law** to meet these standards by 2029. What does this mean for our water system?

1. Anticipating the EPA new standard, the District has been proactive and has already begun the process to build three new treatment facilities that will bring us into compliance with the new EPA standard.
2. Funding for two of the treatment facilities estimated to cost \$23 million dollars has been granted by the State Drinking Water Trust. This is a low or no interest loan that requires the District to pay the loan back to the Trust over 30 years.
3. Pilot studies at the Worcester Street and East Street wells to determine the best method of treatment have been awarded to Tighe and Bond Engineering and have already started.
4. Preliminary design for the Trinity Avenue well has been started by Wright-Pierce Engineering.
5. Once the treatment technology is approved for the treatment of the PFAS compounds, design and bidding for construction will start.
6. Construction of 2 of the treatment facilities should start in the summer of 2025 and be completed within 2 years. The other facility should start construction in the summer of 2026 and be completed by 2028.
7. The Trinity Avenue treatment facility will be the last to be built, as it requires more "hurdles" as this water supply has greater water quality issues from natural

occurring iron and manganese and will require more testing and design. The cost of this treatment facility is likely to top 25-30 million dollars.

8. The Board of Water Commissioners has already taken steps to develop a rate structure that will pay for the approximately \$45-50 million plus financial burden that this will have on the District's financial position. A rate increase of 10% took effect on April 1, 2024. The Board recently voted at their June 12, 2024, meeting to increase rates 10% each quarter for the next 4 quarters starting with the July 1, 2024, usage.
9. In addition to an extremely high debt that will be incurred because of these three new treatment plants, the future operations and maintenance of these facilities is going to be a huge burden financially and on staffing requirements.

The District is dedicated to providing safe and reliable water to all our customers and to be in compliance with State and Federal regulations and mandates. Any questions regarding the water system can be directed to Matthew Pearson, Special Projects Coordinator, or Dave Erickson, Water Superintendent, at the District office 1-508-839-2302.