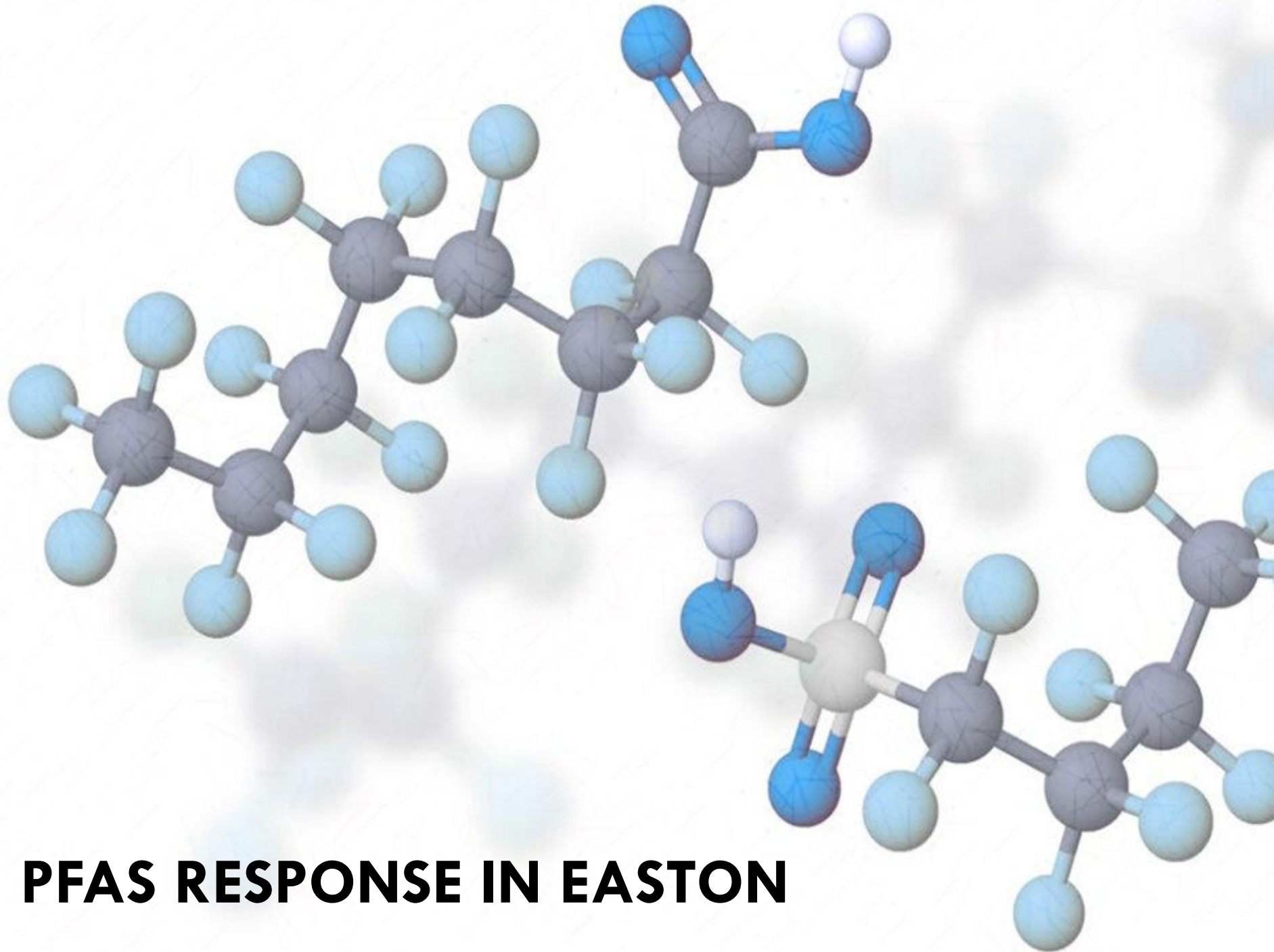


THE PATH FORWARD ON PFAS: EXAMINING STATE AND LOCAL APPROACHES - EASTON

MICHAEL BLANCHARD, EASTON ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

PREPARED FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION JANUARY 20,
2023



PFAS RESPONSE IN EASTON



PFAS RESPONSE ON LOCAL LEVEL: TOWN OF EASTON – WATER DIVISION



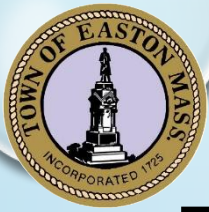
Easton Water Division supplies water to 7,500+ customers.



95% + of service for 25,000 residents is via PWS.



Easton water is sourced from seven (7) ground water wells.



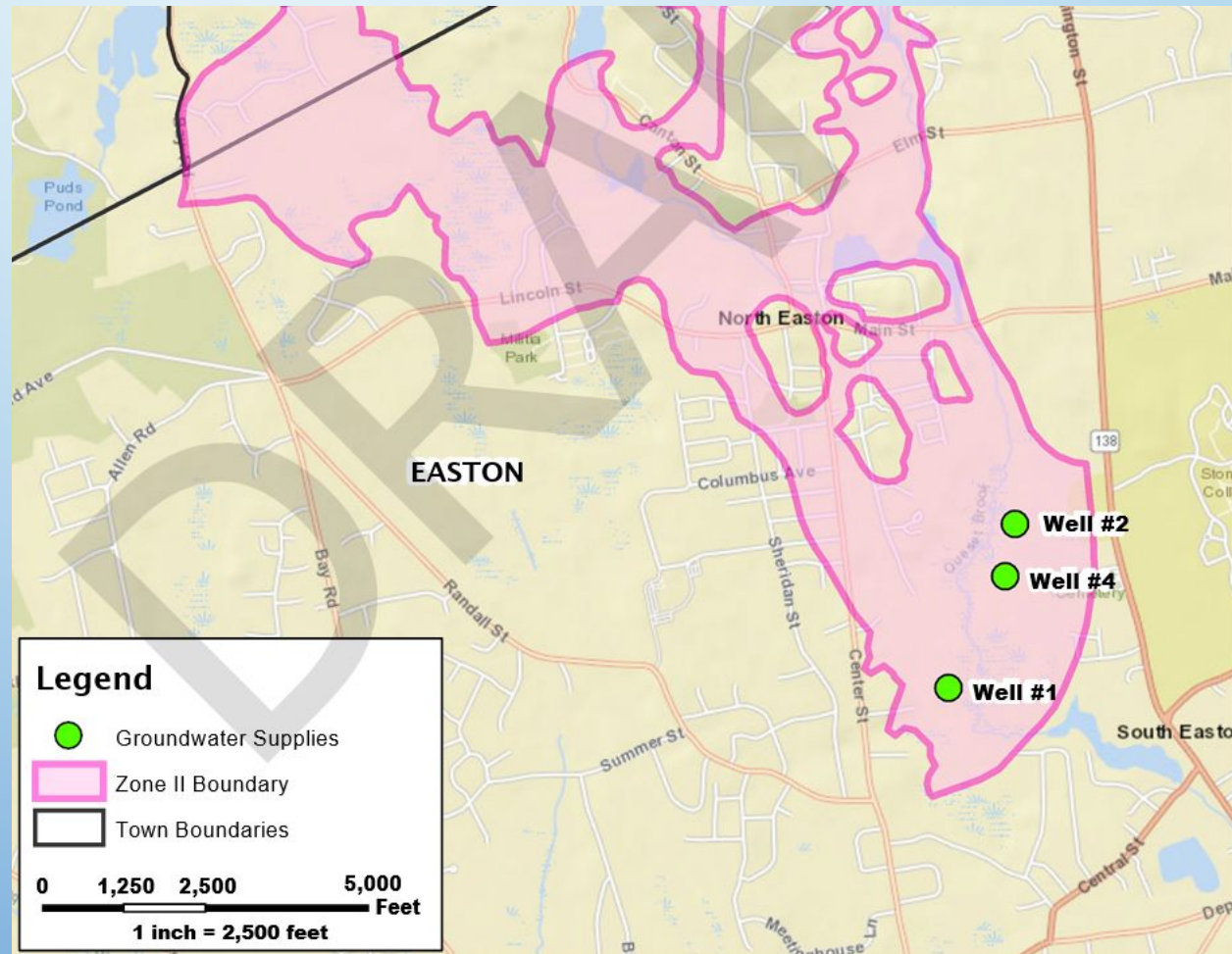
PFAS RESPONSE ON LOCAL LEVEL: TOWN OF EASTON – TESTING FOR PFAS

Tested for PFAS under USEPA UCMR3 in 2014 (PPB scale) and received NDs.

During well replacement in 2019, DEP required Easton test at part-per-trillion scale.

To our surprise, PFAS was detected (15.6 ppt).

Like many administrators, directors and water superintendents since – we had to get up to speed on PFAS – fast.





PFAS RESPONSE STRATEGY

Communicate

Educate

Mitigate



The Enterprise

Easton alerts residents about chemicals in water supply

By Donna Whitehead

dwhitehead@wickedlocal.com

Posted Nov 20, 2019 at 9:15 AM

The tests showed levels of PFAS between 0 and 51 parts per trillion in Easton's finished drinking water.

EASTON — While sampling related to a replacement of one of its wells, the town discovered the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS in the town's water supply.

For questions please contact the PFAS Hotline at (508) 230-0642.

Last updated 6.9.2021

WHAT ARE PFAS?

- 
- [What are PFAS?](#)
 - [New PFAS Regulations in Drinking Water](#)
 - [Has Easton tested for PFAS?](#)
 - [What does DEP recommend?](#)
 - [What is Easton Water Division doing in response to these new regulations?](#)
 - [What about Consumer Products, Food, and other Sources of PFAS?](#)
 - [FAQ](#)
 - [Additional Easton PFAS Information](#)
 - [Additional Resources](#)

WHAT IS EASTON DOING IN ANTICIPATION OF THE DEP PROPOSED PFAS DRINKING WATER STANDARD? [FEB. 2020]



Immediate Term

Options Available to Sensitive Subgroups Right Now

- ✓ Easton Water Division PFAS Home Filter Rebate Program
- ✓ Massachusetts DEP PFAS-Tested Bottled Water Company Information

July 2020 - Ongoing / Available Now

Medium Term

Responsive and Proactive Planning for Permanent Treatment [6-12 months]

- ✓ Ongoing Quarterly Testing and Publication of Results
- ✓ \$100,000 Capital Funding Program for FY2021 (July 1, 2020) to fund PFAS Preparedness Engineering Study
- ✓ Policy and Financial Planning / Advocacy with State Regulatory and Legislative Partners

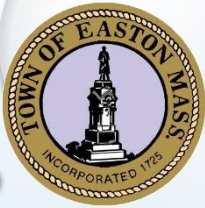
July 2020 - Ongoing / NEW – NWRA Class Action Complaint vs. PFAS Manufacturers

Long Term

**Financing and Construction, if necessary, of Public Treatment Solutions
[1 year – permanent]**

- Publication and Public Review of PFAS Preparedness Study Outcomes and Recommendations
- Capital Planning and Funding for Possible Study Recommendations – such as Treatment Plant(s)
- Possible Water Rate Increases to Finance Bonds for Construction

VISIT www.easton.ma.us/departments/dpw/water_division/pfas_information.php FOR MORE INFORMATION, QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS



PFAS MITIGATION – INTERIM ACTIONS

There is no one-size-fits-all mitigation.

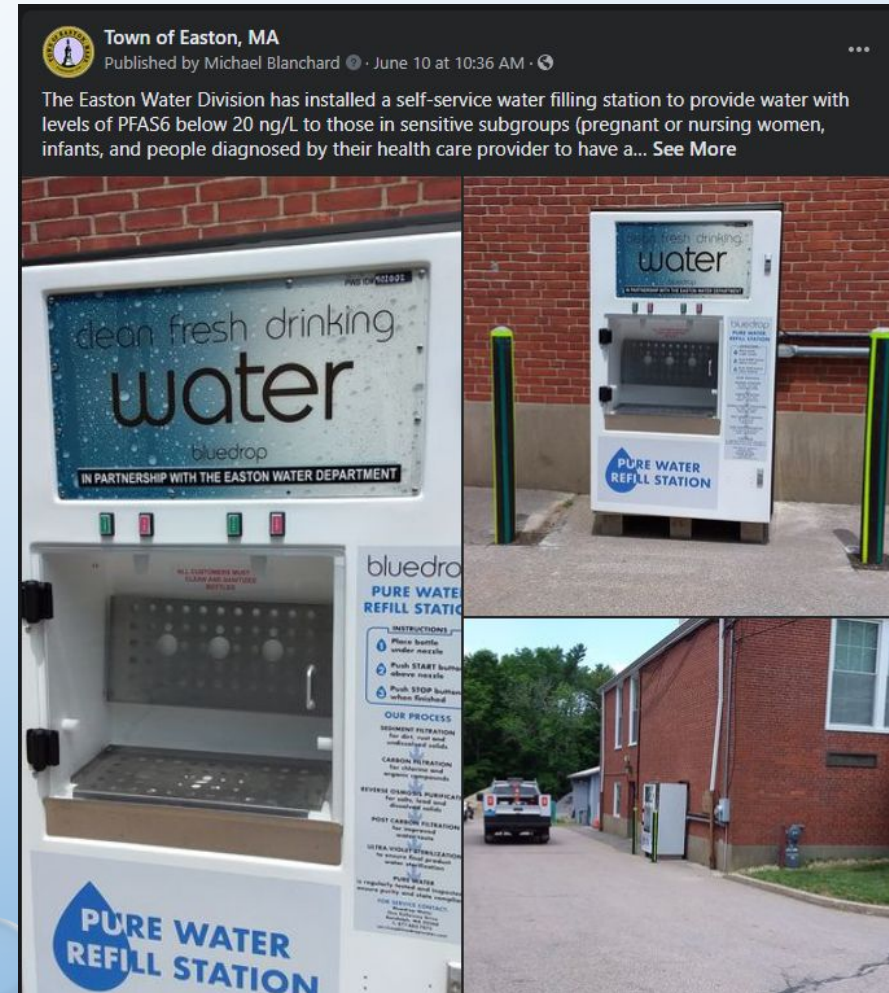
You may need to take interim mitigation steps while planning for permanent treatment:

- Ongoing testing
- Treated point of service water
- Bottled water
- Alternative sources / offlining of wells in violation

Other actions not required by MCL but worth exploring:

- AFFF Take-back programs
- Firefighter turnout gear replacement
- Customer service / PR services to respond to high volume inquiries – Easton DPW currently receiving 100 calls per month re: PFAS

Annual cost to Easton for interim mitigation - \$100,000





PFAS MITIGATION – LONG TERM

Permanent treatment via 3 WTPs - \$11.4M

- WTP likely to be GAC – final design is ongoing
- ETA construction to conclude by June 2023

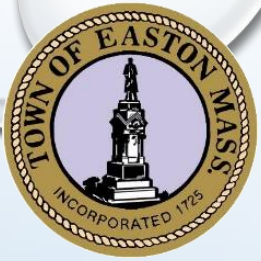
Future proofing other WTPs

- Other wells are not above MCL, but designs will make plant “PFAS ready”

Paying for it

- Primary financing via bond issuance with debt service funded by water user fees.
- Estimated impact to water rate is an increase of 10 % each year for the next 3 to 5 years.





PFAS MITIGATION – LITIGATION

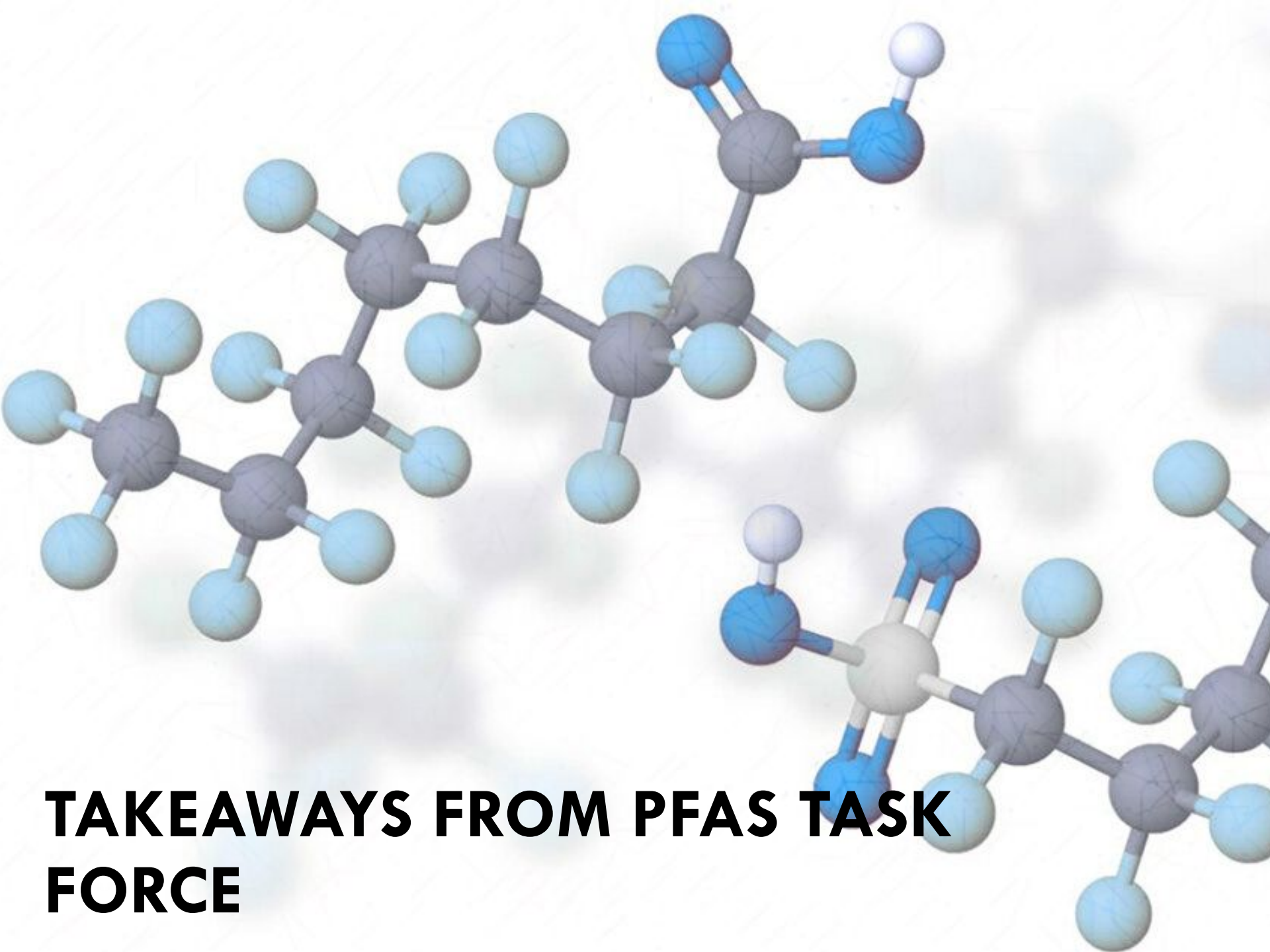
Many municipalities, states, PWSs, and more have filed suit against manufacturers.

Speak with your legal counsel and include them in your response planning efforts.

Examples:

<https://www.mass.gov/news/ag-healey-sues-manufacturers-of-toxic-forever-chemicals-for-contaminating-massachusetts-drinking-water-and-damaging-natural-resources>

https://www.easton.ma.us/newsdetail_T1_R905.php



TAKEAWAYS FROM PFAS TASK FORCE

TAKEAWAYS FROM PFAS INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE

Recognition of scale of the problem across agencies and jurisdictions

Understanding the need for broad response plan at state and federal level – including regulation as a class (rather than PFAS6, 8, 20 etc.)

Agreement that end-point treatment is not sufficient – if we are to meaningfully reduce PFAS exposure, we must “turn off the tap” at production level

Appreciation for the critical need for reliable funding

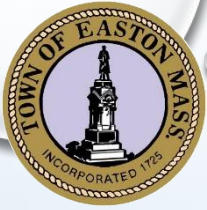
Litigation and accountability for manufactures

Understanding that this will be a generational challenge – we will be confronting this for the rest of our lives



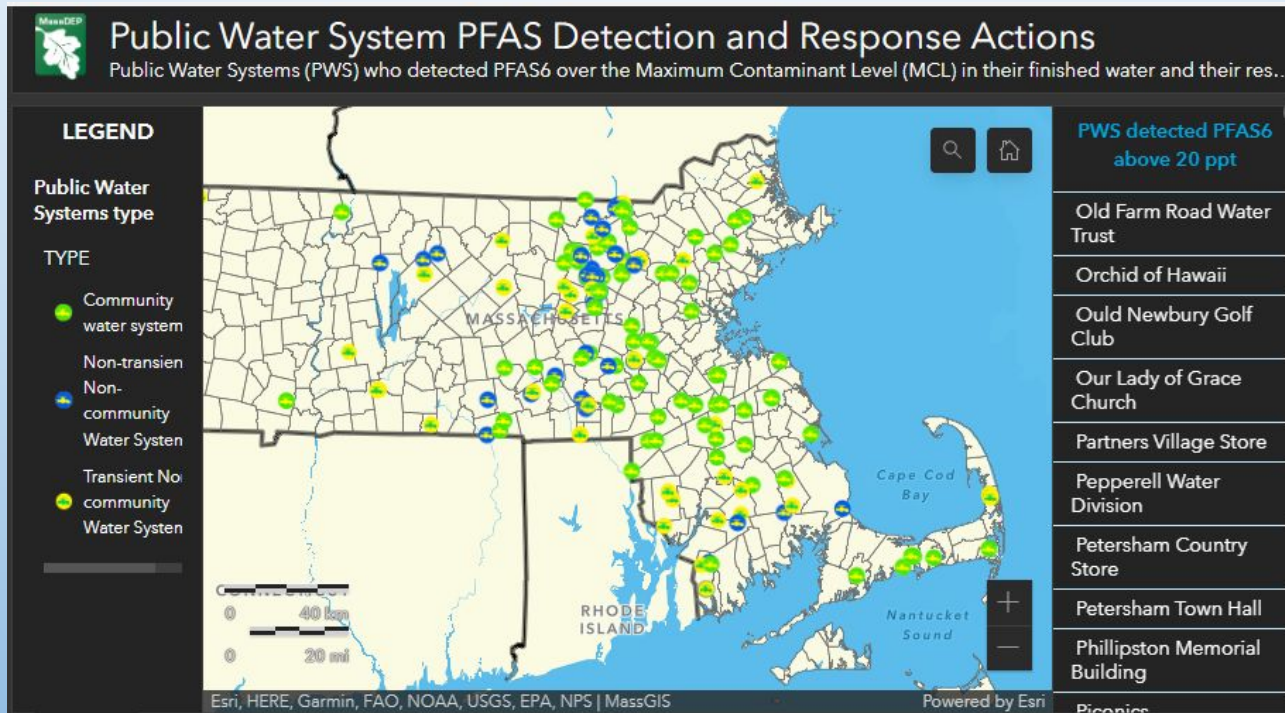


LESSONS LEARNED FOR MUNICIPAL LEADERS



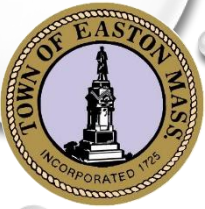
LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

Get prepared.



Source:

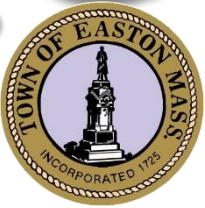
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas#pfas-detected-in-drinking-water-supplies-in-massachusetts>



LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

Unified messaging and team based approach is vital.

- Align the messaging from top to bottom.
- Share what you know – and what you do not.
- Be proactive and have the discussion.
- Advocates can be allies.



LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

Understand the cost.

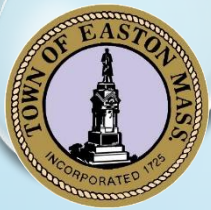
- Seek grants where you can.
- SRF and grants help – but they may not be enough.
- Many treatments are expensive and can require Town Meeting / Council.
- Finance Department must be key member of your response planning to research / advise on fund options.
- MCL is in effect NOW – construction costs are accruing NOW – swift action by MA legislature this session will be critical and influence local capacity to respond.



LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

Respond as a team and lean on your peers.

- You are not alone and cannot fix it alone.
- Work with DEP on interim steps; CWT and other agencies for financing.
- This is not *just* a capital project - include public works, finance, legal counsel, community advocates, elected officials, MMA and other associations - on your response efforts.
- Borrow ideas from your peers.



LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

Support and connect with state leaders and experts who are advancing the conversation.

- PFAS Interagency Task Force was the first step – regulatory and legislative action must follow.
- Meaningful funding will make or break local response capabilities.
- Stay in touch with MMA and your legislative delegations.

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