THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

Sept. 5, 2024

University of Rhode Island Faculty, Staff, and Students:

The Rhode Island PFAS in Drinking Water, Groundwater, and Surface Waters Act from 2022 and amended in 2023 requires public water systems in Rhode Island to regularly sample for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The new law set an interim standard for PFAS in drinking water of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for a total of six PFAS chemicals.

Samples taken by the University of Rhode Island reported concentrations of PFAS for our Kingston Campus water system above the state's new interim drinking water standard.

There is not an immediate risk and, according to the Rhode Island Department of Health, you do not need to use an alternative water supply (e.g., bottled water).

We are committed to sharing those test results with you and to providing ready access to PFAS-related information and resources. Samples recently taken in August 2024 reported PFAS concentrations of 41 ppt.

The results are listed in the attached public notice, also available at uri.edu/pfas-information.

What is being done?

- We are implementing upgrades to the water system that are designed to reduce PFAS to levels well below the Rhode Island interim drinking water standard.
- We have installed point-of-use filtration systems, aimed at reducing PFAS levels, at multiple locations throughout the Kingston Campus. While it is not necessary to utilize locations with added filtration, we are making those available to our community. An interactive map indicating those locations is available on the University's designated PFAS website at uri.edu/pfas-information.
- We are designing and building a new water treatment facility planned to reduce PFAS to levels well below the state's interim drinking water standard.

For more information about PFAS and answers to frequently asked questions, visit the Rhode Island Department of Health site at health.ri.gov/healthrisks/contaminants/about/pfas/.

PUBLIC NOTICE
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Tests Show High Levels of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Water Supplied by:

PWS #RI1858422
University of Rhode Island

We routinely test drinking water for substances that can harm health. Recent tests indicate the presence of chemicals called PFAS in our drinking water.

If PFAS are found above a certain level, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) requires public water systems to advise people not to drink the water. **The amount of PFAS in our system's drinking water was *below* this level.**

According to the Department of Health, you do not need to use an alternative water supply for drinking, preparing food, cooking, brushing teeth, or any activity that might result in swallowing water.

However, the level of PFAS in our drinking water was above Rhode Island's new state standard. For that reason, we are required to take steps to lower the PFAS level in our drinking water. This is important because long-term health effects could potentially result from consuming PFAS. Information is available below on ways that people can limit their exposure to PFAS in drinking water while these water system improvements are being made.

Six PFAS chemicals are regulated in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island interim drinking water standard (the highest level allowed) for PFAS is 20 parts per trillion (ppt). This means that the total amount of the six PFAS chemicals (sum) measured in a drinking water system cannot be higher than 20 ppt. The six PFAS chemicals are PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid), PFHxS (perfluorohexane sulfonic acid), PFHpA (perfluoroheptanoic acid), PFNA (perfluorononanoic acid), and PFDA (perfluorodecanoic acid). These limits were established by Rhode Island statute (RI Gen. Laws 46-32).

The University of Rhode Island exceeded the PFAS interim standard of 20 ppt on Aug. 12, 2024. This means that test results showed more PFAS in the water than is allowed by Rhode Island law. The results are listed below.

PFAS test results for University of Rhode Island:
Water provided to the campus (MF001-EP001): **41 ppt**

About the PFAS test results
Public water systems were required to take PFAS samples by July 1, 2023. The PFAS sampling results are used to determine how often a public water system must monitor for PFAS in the future. If the results show no detections of PFAS, the public water system will monitor for PFAS every two years. If the results show PFAS at or below the 20 ppt interim standard for drinking water, the water system will monitor for PFAS each year. If the results show PFAS exceeds the 20 ppt interim standard, the water system will monitor for PFAS quarterly (once every three months).

Where do PFAS come from?
PFAS are found in many different products that are made to repel water, grease, or stains, like carpets, clothing, non-stick pans, paints, polishes, waxes, cleaning products, and food packaging. Firefighters and the military use them in fire-suppressing foam to fight fires involving gasoline or oil. PFAS can enter the soil, air, and water from many sources, including when products containing PFAS are used, thrown away, or burned. PFAS can last in the environment for a long time.

How are people exposed to PFAS?
Nearly everyone has a low level of PFAS in their blood. People can be exposed to PFAS by eating food, drinking water, accidentally swallowing dust, or breathing air polluted with PFAS. When people are exposed, PFAS can build up in the body. The amount of PFAS in the body can increase to the point where it can harm health.

What are the health effects of PFAS?
Studies have shown certain PFAS can cause negative health effects, including higher cholesterol levels, lower infant birth weights, weakened immune response, and an increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers. The more PFAS you are exposed to through higher drinking water levels and/or other sources, the more PFAS will eventually accumulate (build up) in your body and the greater the risk of health effects developing over time. Infants and young children with developing immune systems; people who are breastfeeding, pregnant, or who may become pregnant; and people with compromised immune systems are particularly at risk. Learn more about PFAS at health.ri.gov/pfas.

What should I do?
- **You do not need to use an alternative water supply for drinking, preparing food, cooking, brushing teeth, or any activity that might result in swallowing water.**
- Do not boil your water. Boiling water will concentrate (increase the level of) these chemicals in the boiled water.
- You can lower your risk of exposure to PFAS by using bottled water or other licensed drinking water that has been tested for these chemicals. Bottled water companies are not required by the Food and Drug Administration to test for PFAS, but many do. Many bottled water companies use treatment that removes PFAS. Contact bottled water manufacturers to ask about PFAS results in bottled water prior to using bottled water to replace drinking water with high PFAS levels.
- The University has installed point-of-use filtration systems, aimed at reducing PFAS levels, at multiple locations throughout the Kingston Campus. While it is not necessary to utilize locations with added filtration, we are making those available to our community. An interactive map indicating those locations is available on the University's designated PFAS website at uri.edu/pfas-information.
- Parents who use formula for infants may consider using a formula that does not require adding water.

- Showering, bathing, or swimming are not a major source of exposure to PFAS. As a precaution, you may consider shorter showers or baths, especially for children who may swallow water while playing in the bath or for people with skin conditions (rashes, cuts, etc.).
- Doing laundry or washing dishes are not a major source of exposure to PFAS.
- If you must use a humidifier, only use water from a safe source.

What is being done?

- **The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff members are our concern, and we are taking steps to lower PFAS levels in our drinking water.**
- We have executed a consent agreement with RIDOH that documents our plan of action to address PFAS levels by an achievable and realistic deadline.
- We test the water supply at least quarterly for PFAS.
- We have installed point-of-use filtration systems, aimed at reducing PFAS levels, at multiple locations throughout the Kingston Campus. While it is not necessary to utilize locations with added filtration, we are making those available to our community.
- We are designing and building a new water treatment facility planned to reduce PFAS to levels well below the Rhode Island interim drinking water standard.
- We have developed a dedicated PFAS website that includes information about PFAS and answers to frequently asked questions.

For questions about the University's water system not addressed by the above referenced sources, please contact Matthew Simeone, water system manager, at matthew_simeone@uri.edu.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by
University of Rhode Island, PWS ID#: RI 1858422
60 Tootell Rd., Kingston, RI 02881
401-874-4206
Date distributed: Sept. 5, 2024