



January 17, 2023

Mr. David Brunette - Chairman
Town of Stella
2496 CTH C
P.O. Box 1141
Rhineland WI 54501

Dear Mr. Brunette:

Thank you for your letter dated December 31, 2022. The department shares the concern the Town of Stella has with respect to private wells being contaminated with per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The department is committed to addressing these concerns in collaboration with the Town and other agencies. The department looks forward to attending the public meeting on Thursday, January 19. In your letter, you asked if the State could support you in the following ways:

1. Immediate testing to determine the location of the contaminated wells

The department has offered to sample 58 properties, of which 38 agreed to participate. The department is reviewing the data collected through this effort, in addition to existing, additional available data (e.g., land spreading fields, landfill and wastewater discharge data), across department programs, to determine what additional well sampling may be warranted. This is an evolving situation, and as the department receives new information and results, the area of study may change.

2. Assessment of each source of contamination

We have assigned a technical coordinator who is working with department staff and the Department of Health Services to review the data available to help identify next steps in source identification. The department is also in ongoing discussions with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for possible assistance in the coordinated review and response.

3. Provision of temporary water to all affected residents in the community, pursuant to NR 738, including the resources to administer the program

The department arranged for Great Lakes Distributing to deliver 336 cases of individual bottled water to the Town Hall on January 10, 2023 and contracting for an emergency 6-month procurement of in-home water delivery is underway. Selection of a vendor will be contingent on their ability to supply water that meets Department of Health Services health guidance for PFAS. Any residence with contamination found in exceedance of the state health guidance has received outreach from the department and the Department of Health Services that included a copy of the results and recommendations to protect their health relating to drinking water. The upcoming water delivery service will be available to those residences with a drinking water advisory. It is the department's goal to have a contract in place in accordance with state procurement rules with a water delivery vendor in time for the January 19 public meeting so that eligible residents may sign up that evening. Blank agreements are being mailed to affected wells owners and will be available for residents to view at the Town Hall ahead of time. The department is developing a website dedicated to the Town of Stella that will go live on January 19.

In addition, the well-specific health advisory makes the well owner eligible to apply for the well compensation program which may help pay for a more permanent solution. Given the contamination levels in certain existing wells, a new well or treatment that supplies safe drinking water may be technically or financially challenging. Information on DNR's well compensation program will be presented at the public meeting. Fact sheets and applications will be available for residents. DNR will also have a sign-up sheet for residents who want DNR to contact them individually to discuss eligibility (e.g., income requirements) and application for this program.

4. Work with the Town to create a long-term solution to providing clean water to our residents and to remediate the contamination in our area


The department is committed to ongoing coordination with and providing technical assistance to the Town and affected residents to help identify long-term options for safe water. These solutions will depend on the level and extent of the contamination, and may include drilling new private wells, installing treatment on home water systems, or building a public water system to serve the area. The department commits to collaboratively navigating the iterative, long-term process inherent in the investigation and cleanup of environmental contamination.

5. Meeting with DNR officials within the next 10 business

The DNR looks forward to meeting with the Town on Thursday, January 19, 2023, at 5pm at the Town Hall.

Thanks again for reaching out to me with your concerns. We look forward to working with the Town to develop a long-term solution for safe water. We are also developing a PFAS-response action plan to assist local governments in the future.

Sincerely,



Adam Payne
Secretary

cc: Mr. Bob Goodin, Town of Stella Supervisor
Mr. Rich Hirman, Town of Stella Supervisor
Ms. Stacy Schickert, Town of Stella Clerk
Ms. Kathy Baker, Town of Stella Treasurer
Mr. Jim Zellmer, Environmental Management Administrator, Department of Natural Resources
Mr. James Yach, Northern Region Secretary's Director, Department of Natural Resources
Ms. Deb Standridge, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health Services