

Statement to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife
Regarding PFOA Contamination of Residential Property
and Need for Municipal Water Connection

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My wife and I purchased a lot and built a home on Asa's Way, located in a residential subdivision approximately ¼ mile east of the former "Chemfab" manufacturing facility (last operated by Saint-Gobain). We moved into the house in December 2008. This "North Village" neighborhood is severely impacted by PFOA contamination that was emitted from the Chemfab facility because of its location downwind and nearly adjacent to the source and because of the fact that neither the North Bennington nor the Bennington municipal water systems serve the development; all homes obtaining water for domestic use from on-site wells.

Testing has shown water supplied to our home to have a PFOA level ranging from 293 to 373 ppt, far in excess of Vermont and proposed EPA standards. Some homes in the immediate area have had higher readings and some lower, but nearly all exceed the standards. Blood test results from our family show concentrations of up to 40 mcg/l, significantly higher than "average" levels observed in the general population.

In addition to obvious concerns about long-term health impacts to ourselves and our children, we are concerned about diminution in the value of our property, its marketability, and the viability of future development in the neighborhood. We feel that any resolution to the problems presented by the contamination must begin with connection to a municipal water system. Some of the reasons for this conclusion include:

- The point of entry treatment (POET) systems provided by Saint-Gobain appear to provide effective treatment, but require costly regular maintenance and must be monitored to ensure that they are working properly. For example, a few months ago I observed that our system was leaking and contacted the contractor who had installed the system. A new part had to be ordered and during the time that we waited to receive the part, one section of the system had to be bypassed, eliminating a critical component of the treatment process.
- The presence of the POET systems, in and of themselves, affect the value of the property. Water is the most fundamental resource used in a home. Imagine the impression made on a prospective purchaser who, when inspecting the house, is told that the large array of canisters and tubes in the utility room is there to treat the carcinogen-laced water entering from the well. The value of the property relative to any comparable property in the community will immediately nosedive.
- The PFOA contamination we are dealing with differs significantly from most other cases involving pollution at nearby industrial, or post-industrial, properties. Clean-up or remediation

of the Chemfab site, while desirable, would not in the near or long term restore the value of our property, or reduce the risk to our health. Our property is contaminated, regardless of what happens on the Chemfab site. PFOA levels measured in soil samples from our neighborhood reveal concentrations 10 to 100 times greater than the levels in our water, meaning that groundwater will continue to leach PFOA into on-site wells for decades to come. Without a municipal water connection, the POET systems, with all of their problems, would have to remain in place indefinitely.

- There are a number of vacant lots for sale in the North Village development. But for the PFOA contamination, the lots would be quite attractive given the convenient location and overall character of the neighborhood. Sale of those lots, absent a municipal water system connection, is virtually impossible, however, because of the near certainty that any on-site well would access heavily contaminated groundwater. The inability to complete build-out of the subdivision prevents the neighborhood from being fully completed and further degrades property values for everyone.

Ultimate resolution of issues including treatment of physical injuries caused by the PFOA, long-term medical monitoring, and reduced property values may take some time to resolve through legal action, but we can be certain that there will be no effective resolution without first ensuring that all affected properties have access to clean water through connection to one of the two municipal systems in the area.

Thank you for your time and consideration.