



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
L A C R O S S E

March 10, 2021

VIA UNITED STATES MAIL & Email

Secretary Preston D. Cole
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster Street PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Re: City of La Crosse, Wisconsin – PFAS

Dear Secretary Cole:

I write concerning the Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”) contamination impacting the City of La Crosse (the “City”) and surrounding communities. The City is requesting that the State of Wisconsin engage in a coordinated strategy to (1) test and identify the boundaries of contamination in the La Crosse area; (2) investigate and identify the sources of that contamination; and (3) provide safe drinking water to the La Crosse community pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code Ch. 738 (“NR 738”), until a more permanent solution can be achieved. The City also requests a meeting with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) to discuss these issues within the next ten days.

State leadership on these issues is critical. The contamination not only affects areas in the City, but in the Town of Campbell and La Crosse County. Municipal government budgets have already been devastated by the impacts of COVID-19 and cannot bear the brunt of solving the PFAS problems on our own.

The City has been tackling and bearing the steep costs of this issue alone for years. When PFAS were first identified in a municipal well near the La Crosse Regional Airport, the City began an investigation. This included an extensive testing program to identify the range and the source of any contamination by testing not only City wells, but hundreds of private wells around the Airport. Where the City’s testing showed contamination in the City water supply, we took the affected wells offline to ensure that there was no further contamination to homes which use City water. The City has also been supplying bottled water to dozens of affected members in the Town of Campbell. Through its investigation, the City believes that aqueous film-forming foam (“AFFF”) products used at the Airport contaminated two City municipal wells near the Airport and numerous private wells located south of the Airport. The City has recently brought a lawsuit against the manufacturers of the AFFF products for causing the contamination at the Airport site.

Now, however, it appears PFAS contamination may exist at nearby sites separate and apart from the Airport contamination, specifically in the Town of Campbell. This contamination appears unrelated to the Airport site, but is no less serious to our residents, the City, the neighboring Town

of Campbell and the greater La Crosse area. Even where the contamination is unrelated to the Airport site, the City has and continues to expend resources to have its environmental consultant tabulate, map and interpret sample results, helping to understand the situation more broadly and putting it in context for the DNR and others.

The City can no longer go at this without substantial State assistance. It is time for the State to step in with a holistic approach to this serious problem. We request that the State immediately support our communities in the following ways:

- (1) Immediate testing to determine the extent of PFAS contamination in the La Crosse community, including in private wells in the Town of Campbell;
- (2) Assessment of each of the sources of contamination;
- (3) Provision of temporary water to all affected residents in the community pursuant to NR 738; and
- (4) Work with the community to design a long-term solution to providing clean water to La Crosse area residents and to remediate the contamination in the La Crosse area.

We request a meeting with DNR officials within the next ten days and will make ourselves available at any time to discuss these important issues with DNR.

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Tim Kabat
City of La Crosse

cc: Darsi Foss
David Rozeboom