



TESTING *for* PEASE

The PFAS Contamination at Pease: A Community Perspective

CHEJ Grassroots Call | March 19, 2019

Andrea Amico, Co-Founder

Who is Testing for Pease?

Testing for Pease is a community action group, whose mission is to be a reliable resource for education and communication while advocating for a long-term health plan on behalf of those impacted by the PFAS water contamination at the former Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, NH

From left to right: Alayna, Andrea & Michelle



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Why Did We Form?

- May 2014 – newspaper revealed that PFAS contamination was discovered in three wells supplying drinking water to the Pease International Tradeport (former Pease Air Force Base)
 - PFAS = Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (a diverse group of compounds resistant to heat, water, and oil)
- One well (Haven well) tested over the EPA PHAs that were in place at that time (PFOS = 2500 ppt)
- All of our families were exposed to contaminated public drinking water at Pease



History of the Pease Air Force Base

- 1956 to 1991 Strategic Air Command (SAC) Base
- 4,365 acres of land with 3 on site wells
- In 1989 there were ~4500 total employees on Pease (active-duty military, civil service workers and non-appropriated fund employees)
- In 1990 military personnel began leaving the base
- In 1991 Pease AFB closed and became the first base in the nation to be closed under BRAC
- In 1991 Pease became a Superfund site



History of the Pease Tradeport

- Pease International Tradeport started development in 1991
- 3 wells supply drinking water (Haven, Smith, & Harrison)
- Currently home to ~ 250 businesses and still growing
 - 2 large daycare centers
 - Restaurants
 - Healthcare/medical office buildings
 - Multiple colleges
 - Golf course
- ~10,000 people employed on Pease daily (and growing)
- Portsmouth International Airport (PSM) currently in operation



How was Pease Contaminated with PFAS?

- Pease drinking water became contaminated with PFAS by a fire fighting foam known as AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam)
- Used by the Air Force/DoD since the 1970's
- 21 areas identified where AFFF was used, stored, or released on Pease
- AFFF used because it is effective in putting out petroleum based fires & only foam to meet military specifications



What PFAS are detected in the Pease water?

- PFAS first tested in drinking water at Pease in April & May of 2014:

PFOS = 2500 ppt

PFOA = 350 ppt

PFHxS = 960 ppt

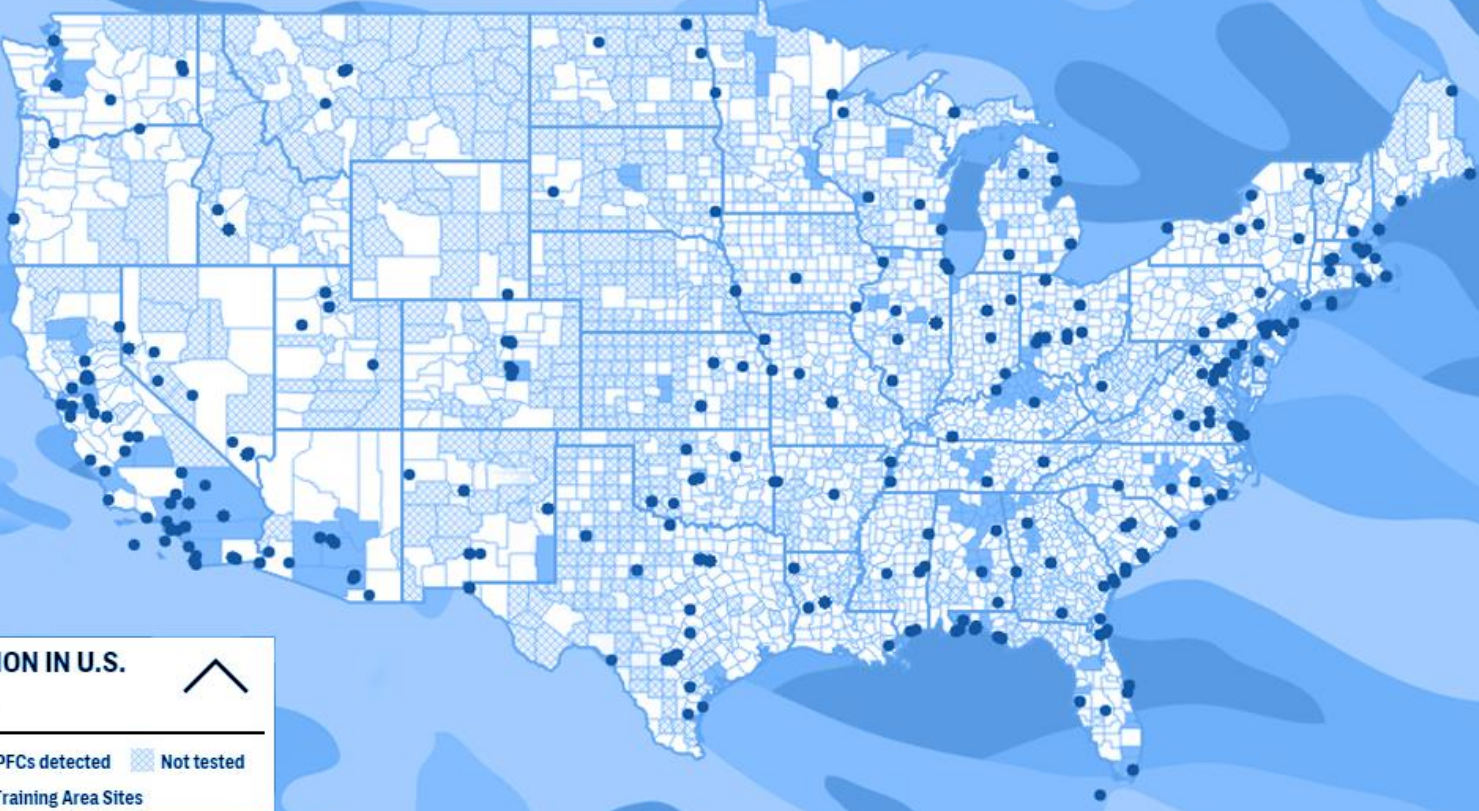
*EPA PHA 2014 = 200 ppt for PFOS & 400 ppt for PFOA

*EPA LHA 2016 = 70 ppt for PFOS & PFOA

- Multiple other PFAS detected in drinking water at low levels at Pease
- Haven well was estimated to have supplied 46% of water to the Pease businesses before it was shut down in 2014
- Community is concerned about ALL the PFAS in the drinking water despite lack of health advisories



As of 2014, 664 fire or crash training sites identified by the Department of Defense where
AFFF laced with PFASs were used in the US

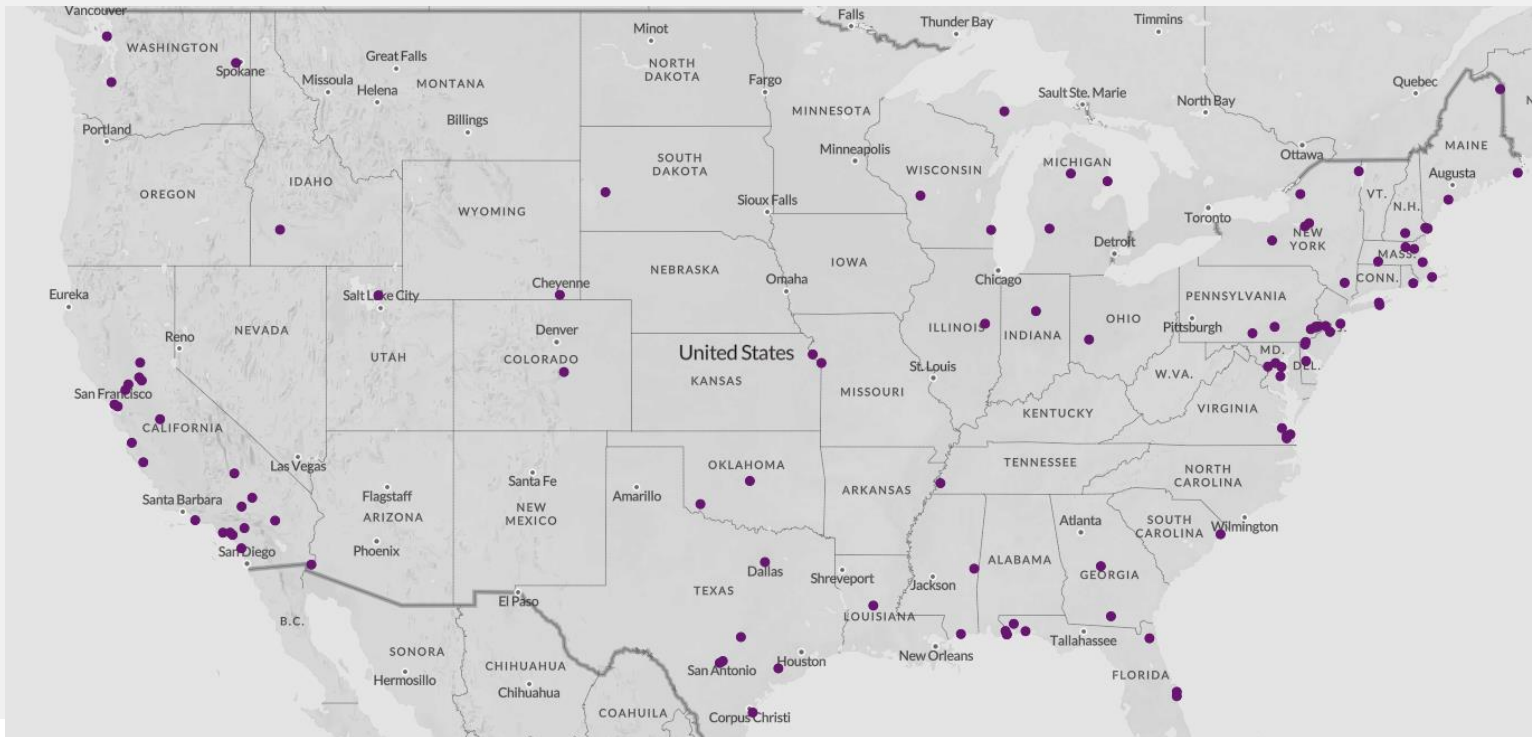


PFC CONTAMINATION IN U.S. DRINKING WATER 

 PFCs detected  No PFCs detected  Not tested

 U.S. Military Fire/Crash Training Area Sites

MAPPING PFAS CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION AT 106 U.S. MILITARY SITES



Why are we concerned about PFAS?

- Fluorinated, man made compounds not naturally found in the environment that do not break down easily, persisting for decades
- Long half lives in the body with known bioaccumulation
- Can be difficult to filter in drinking water (especially short chains)
- Associated with multiple adverse health effects that impact many systems of the human body



- PFAS pass the placenta and breastmilk to fetus/infants impacting future generations
- Almost 99% of all Americans have some detected levels of PFAS in the blood
- Long term health effects not well understood with lots of emerging science

Agencies Testing for Pease has worked with...

- NH Dept of Health & Human Services (NH DHHS)
- NH Dept of Environmental Services (NH DES)
- US Air Force (USAF)
- US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)
- City of Portsmouth Dept of Public Works (DPW) & Portsmouth Public Health Officer
- City of Portsmouth City Council (i.e., city councilors, mayor)
- Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR/CDC)
- Local, State, and Federal elected officials



Community Accomplishments

2015

- Advocated for PFAS blood testing program for the entire exposed community.
- Pease blood tests reveal elevated levels of PFAS when compared to national average
- City of Portsmouth forms CAB and holds 14 meetings in 8 months with various stakeholders
- EPA places strict order on US Air Force to clean up contamination and Haven well.
- CAB meets with ATSDR for the first time to discuss possible health studies

2016

- Air Force agrees to treat all 3 drinking water wells on Pease.
- ATSDR forms Pease CAP and starts a feasibility assessment.
- Air Force forms a Pease RAB.



Community Accomplishments

2017

- ATSDR completes Pease Feasibility Assessment indicating health studies can be done
- Air Force refuses to pay for health studies due to “lack of authority”
- Senator Shaheen is successful in getting amendment in NDAA to give DoD the authority to fund health studies



2018

- \$20 million appropriated for PFAS health studies
- Amico attends EPA's National PFAS Summit in DC.
- Amico testifies at first Senate hearing on PFAS.
- TFP involved in grants to look at immune function in children & non target analysis at Pease

Community Accomplishments

2019

- Pease health study to start later this year.
- Amico attends the SOTU address as Senator Shaheen's guest to highlight PFAS issues
- Air Force has spent ~ \$45 million in remediation with ongoing clean up.
- Resin filters to be added to the GAC filters on Pease drinking water
- Testing for Pease collaborates with many other PFAS impacted communities around the nation and world



The PFAS Contamination at Pease: A Community Perspective

Relationships: State and Federal Elected Officials & Impact on PFAS Legislation



Challenges We Have Faced

- Unregulated contaminants – communities still being exposed/Lack of PHAs for many other PFAS still present in drinking water (4,700+ PFAS)
- Community has to advocate to be seen as critical stakeholders and push for progress, research, guidelines - government moves slow
- Lack of funding = roadblock in research /remediation and making decisions for public safety at state/federal level
- Physicians need PFAS education to help patients be proactive in protecting health
- Inconsistent messaging from government agencies - told health effects are inconclusive/getting blood tested not recommended, yet many scientific studies contradict (need to protect most vulnerable)
- Limited labs capable of testing water and blood = testing is not easily accessible, time consuming and expensive
- Difficulty streamlining communication between multiple agencies and community



Positive Developments

- Engagement and collaboration with other PFAS impacted community groups across the US
- Developed relationships with multiple government agencies and elected officials
- GAC treatment on two of the Pease wells w/ongoing remediation efforts - planning for GAC & resin technology in the near future
- Working with highly respected doctors, epidemiologists, scientists & environmental health experts



Positive Developments

- Opportunity for grants to support community efforts and pursue additional water testing
- Formed National PFAS Coalition - bringing together impacted communities from across the US
- ATSDR Multi-Site PFAS Health study with Pease to be first community studied
- Media has been critical in raising awareness and promoting accountability
- Opportunities to go to DC and advocate on a federal level



What we want you to take away...

- Organize with other community members to be effective
- Be factual in what you say to build credibility and trust with stakeholders
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with your elected officials
- Use the media to help get your messaging out and hold stakeholders to their word
- Be patient and recognize that this work is a marathon and not a sprint
- Celebrate the small victories along the way
- Never give up! This work is so important.



Questions/Discussion....

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

~ Margaret Mead

For more information, please visit:



www.testingforpease.com

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